JUNE 1981
$1.50

MONTHLY REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST MAGAZINE

VOLUME 33
2

Revolution in Poland

MICHAEL SZKOLNY

Socialism, Democracy, and Planning

HARRY MAGDOFF

World Crisis of the 1980s

AN INTERVIEW WITH SAMIR AMIN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CONTENTS VOLUME 33 NUMBER 2 JUNE 1981

REVIEW OF THE MONTH: Revolution in Poland by Michael Szkolny 1
SOCIALISM, DEMOCRACY, AND PLANNING by Harry Magdoff 22
THE WORLD CRISIS OF THE 1980s: An Interview with Samir Amin 33
BOOKS: Capitalism with the Gloves Off by Doug Dowd 44
Kurdistan: The Unknown Struggle by Richard Morrock 51
CORRESPONDENCE: Clear and Present Danger: I, by Michael Quirk; II, by Name Withheld; III, The Editors Comment 55

MONTHLY REVIEW (ISSN 0027 0520) is a publication of Monthly Review Foundation, Inc., a non-profit institution. It is published monthly except July and August, when bimonthly, and copyright © 1981, by Monthly Review, Inc. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send all address changes (Form 3579) to Monthly Review Foundation, 62 West 14th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011.

EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS:
62 West 14th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011. Telephone: (212) 691-2555.
Europe: R. Handyside, 47 Red Lion Street, London WCIR 4PF. Telephone: 01-242-3501. Giro Account No. 557 6350.
MR Edizione Italiana: viale Oracio Flacco 15, Bari 70124. Telephone: 241919, 246157.
MR Greek Edition: Zoodochou Pighis 17 (2nd floor), Athens 145, Greece.
Revista Mensual/Monthly Review: Vallfogona, 40-baixos, Barcelona 12, Spain.
Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

NEWSSTAND DISTRIBUTOR:
B. De Boer, Inc., 113 E. Centre Street, Nutley, N.J. 07110.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE:
U.S.: One year $15, students and senior citizens $11; Foreign $18, students and senior citizens $13.
Libraries and Institutions: U.S. $24; Foreign $26.
Additional Postage: First Class (U.S. and Canada) $9; Airmail: Central America and Mexico $11; South America and Europe $16; Middle East, Greece, Asia, Africa and Australia $20.

EDITORS: Paul M. Sweezy Harry Magdoff Leo Huberman (1903-1968)
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Bobbye Ortiz

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

It was of course an accident and not the result of prescience or good planning that the manuscript of Daniel Singer's *The Road To Gdansk*, published by MR Press in February, was nearing completion at just the time that the strike wave of last August erupted on Poland's Baltic coast. This accident of timing allowed the author to add material on the new situation, based not only on relevant documents and press reports but also on first-hand information gathered during a visit to his native country at the height of the struggles to establish the new independent Polish trade union movement. The result was a solid and timely book, not a hasty pot-boiler, on one of the most significant international political developments of recent years. In these circumstances one might have thought that that the normal bias of the bourgeois media against taking notice of anything published by a left-wing publisher would be put aside long enough to allow prompt publication of serious reviews of a book dealing with a subject of such obvious importance. But no, it hasn't worked out that way. No review of *The Road To Gdansk* has yet appeared in any of the media, such as the daily and Sunday *New York Times* and the *New York Review of Books*, which pride themselves on being leaders in the field of book criticism. The reason is probably complicated: ideological aversion and

(*Continued on inside back cover*)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

REVOLUTION IN POLAND

By Michael Szkolny

The bizarre ideological inversions which characterize the modes of expression of contemporary East European political movements serve to render invisible to the casual observer the real social character of these movements. For this reason alone most Western analyses of the recent events in Poland have conformed broadly to one of two stereotypes. First, there is the conventional wisdom of the right according to which the two primary forces in the present surge of revolt are nationalism and religion. Second, there is the semi-apologetic view favored by Social Democrats and Eurocommunists which sees the upheaval as a struggle for the "democratization of socialism." Both analyses of course contain a germ of truth; but whereas from the first standpoint it is impossible (and perhaps undesirable) to see the real social forces which express themselves *faute de mieux* in the traditional language of reaction, the second standpoint begs the most fundamental question about the character of the existing regimes of Eastern Europe.

This brief article is an attempt to transcend the ideological preconceptions which bedevil such analyses and thus to provide, in a bare and inadequate outline, a fundamentally different view of the crisis in Poland.

What people do, what they believe they do, and what they say they do are in general all different: these distinctions are a

Michael Szkolny is the pen name of a Polish writer presently living in Paris.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

commonplace of social analysis. Yet the tension between *action* and *belief* is far better understood than the tension between *belief* and *doctrine*. Indeed it is probable that the latter tension has become important as a political phenomenon only since the advent of the technology of mass communication. The relative neologism "propaganda" has become a semantic necessity in our own era in order to eliminate the element of ambiguity inherent in older words such as doctrine or ideology.

Where the belief and the propaganda of a ruling class differ significantly, the class becomes the victim of a cynicism which inevitably penetrates throughout society. It is generally assumed that such a contradiction between belief and propaganda represents an ideological dysfunction. This opinion derives from the tacit assumption that the function of propaganda is to convince the recipient of its truth. Such an assumption is, however, *a priori* unjustified; if the ideology of a ruling class serves to protect the existing order, then the only necessary function of propaganda is to induce a set of beliefs in the ruled which in no way threatens that order. Propaganda does not have to be believed in order to be effective.

The rulers of Poland, as of other East European countries, do not for the most part believe in the ideals of socialism or in Marxist theory; there is no evidence that they are even aware of Marx's methodology.* Furthermore their propaganda resembles Marxism only in its phraseology. Not only are truncated versions of once powerful revolutionary slogans arranged in a shameless pastiche alongside chauvinist sentiments and medieval superstitions, but the very meaning of the fundamental terms has been transformed beyond recognition. Thus for example the Polish words for *socialism, socialization,* and *internationalism* today designate respectively the existing social order, state ownership, and subordination to the interests of the Soviet Union. The term *anti-socialist force* is used to denote any form of political opposition, while the word *anarchist* is today reserved for those oppositionists who belong to some current of the European socialist tradition. These examples form part of a general phe-

* It is ironic that an important reason for the disastrous failure of Gierek's economic strategy in the seventies lay in the gross underestimation of (or frank disbelief in) the depth of the capitalist recession.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nomenon of *conceptual embezzlement* which reaches deep into the vernacular. This Orwellian process fundamentally limits people's conceptual framework by rendering inexpressible a whole range of ideas. In consequence these ideas vanish deep into the collective subconscious from which they struggle to appear in periods of social crisis, often in the strangest of new clothes. Thus, for example, the original meanings of the terms cited above cannot be expressed in contemporary Polish without complicated circumlocutions.

The official doctrine of "Marxism-Leninism" rests on two basic assumptions: firstly that the ruling party incarnates the objective interests of the working class and of the whole nation and secondly that the state is part of a great international proletarian movement.[1] Social analysts of Eastern Europe are in general agreed that the persuasive value of this ideology is almost nil. Yet there is an inherent contradiction in their further conclusion that this ideology is *functionally* useless. The Polish émigré philosopher Kolakowski, for example, argues that Marxism-Leninism is considered by the party apparatus to be an annoying outgrowth which cannot be eliminated, since its suppression would remove the "basis of legitimacy of the regime."[2] Yet this explanation is remarkably unconvincing. What is the value of a doctrine *as a basis for legitimacy* if no one believes in it? The solution to this puzzle is crucial to an understanding of the ideology of state collectivist society.

It is no accident that the ideas which are alienated by conceptual embezzlement are the ideas of Marxism and of the entire socialist tradition. This is the *primary function* of ideology in state collectivist society; for by this gigantic intellectual fraud the ruling class succeeds in cutting off the entire population from the only source of ideas which represent a serious potential threat to the social order. Formal censorship of traditional socialist works is certainly widespread, and censorship of contemporary radical scholarship is almost total; yet this form of censorship is rendered nearly superfluous by the qualitatively higher form of censorship which conceptual embezzlement constitutes.

There is, however, one other fundamental reason for the rejection of Marxism by the majority of East European op-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

positionists: the traditional Marxist assumption that a post-capitalist society necessarily has a socialist character, an axiom which is common not only to the world's two ruling ideologies but also to many independent socialist currents. It is therefore not surprising if East Europeans share it and conclude that the "socialist" character of their societies is the source of their oppression. This is neither more nor less surprising than the complementary belief of most Western Marxists (living at a comfortable distance) that the fundamental production relations obtaining in the Soviet Union are socialist, albeit with certain "deformations."

Those few East European socialists who have succeeded in piercing the veil of conceptual embezzlement have reached conclusions of a radically different kind. Although Marx himself failed to envisage the possibility of *bifurcations* in the historical sequence of modes of production, such a possibility is not *a priori* inconsistent with a Marxist perspective. In fact, given the historical evidence, the conclusion that state collectivist societies represent a new mode of production distinct from both capitalism and socialism seems now inescapable. Yet Western socialists have in practice been extraordinarily reluctant to draw this conclusion, or even to familiarize themselves with the surprisingly rich literature adopting this standpoint.[3] Perhaps this has less to do with the question of empirical evidence than with a human weakness for the comforting simplicity of Manichean visions.

The Intellectual Origins of Dissent in Poland

The particular forms which political opposition in postwar Poland has taken have been conditioned by a complex of highly specific historical conditions. The fact that state collectivism was imposed on Poland by a foreign power inevitably gave to any opposing tendencies a nationalist hue. Indeed Poland's tragic history of foreign domination has produced a situation in which *every* political tendency has tried to justify its position by claiming that its policy would maximize Poland's national independence. The postwar regime itself has shown great adeptness in harnessing this nationalistic sentiment.

The second factor of fundamental importance in the devel-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

opment of the Polish opposition has been the existence of a strong Catholic church. Since the church was the only institution in postwar Poland with sufficiently deep social roots to survive as an independent force in civil society, all currents of opposition tended, in practice, at least until 1976, to work within the institutional cover of either the church or the party. This rather severe restriction has caused enormous ideological confusion and has in general impeded the emergence of clear political programs.

Thirdly, the complete destruction of the prewar left by Hitler's and Stalin's purges, by emigration, and by cooption into the party apparatus, entailed the total absence of any independent socialist tradition after the war. Thus the first generation of radical opposition came principally from within the party, the opposition of the church having in this period a largely atavistic character. Many of the best known young intellectuals of the period of the 1956 revolt belonged to this "revisionist" current. These intellectuals had been educated in the Stalinist school but were seeking a democratization of the party, more independence from the Soviet Union, and a more liberal interpretation of official doctrine. They constituted the left ideologists of the movement which brought Gomulka to power. Even during the turbulent aftermath of October 1956, however, they could not bring themselves to radically challenge the nature of the regime or the role of the party. Some of them retained a certain diminishing influence in the party in the years of "normalization" after 1956, but the 1968 confrontation between the intelligentsia and the regime resulted in their expulsion from the party and many were forced into exile. Since the revisionist program was discredited by its total failure, the year 1968 effectively marked the end of this tendency within the opposition.[4]

A more radical current of opposition began to emerge in the early sixties. In January 1965 two young university teachers, Kuron and Modzelewski, wrote a courageous open letter to the Polish Communist Party in response to their expulsion from the party.[5] This lucid and original document was certainly not addressed to the party *leadership*; according to its perspective, the existing form of society in Poland constituted a new type

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of class domination in which a "central political bureaucracy" exercised exclusive control over the means of production and the disposal of the surplus product. Such a system could be overthrown only by revolution and the establishment of direct democracy with a system of workers' councils and a central council of elected delegates. In their vision of the future organization of society, the authors chose to emphasize several ideas which they saw as serving to secure the continuity of democracy: workers' delegates would be subject to immediate recall, the right to form political parties in order to campaign for particular programs would be guaranteed, etc. Perhaps most interestingly they stressed the necessity of a system of trade unions organized *independently* of the governing system of councils. Such ideas were not mere utopian fantasies: they had their origin in an analysis of the failure of the 1956 revolution.

Kuron and Modzelewski were certainly guilty of revolutionary optimism—a sin for which in the short term both they and their ideas paid dearly. They believed that state collectivism in Poland (and more generally in Eastern Europe) was at the end of its resources in 1965, and that revolution was not only inevitable but imminent. They seriously underestimated both the isolation of the radical intelligentsia and the ideological power of conceptual embezzlement. Yet in evaluating the history of the immediate postwar period, they themselves had stressed a fact which twenty years after the war was still an important source of strength for the Polish regime. Assessing this period they noted:

> [P]roduction relations based on bureaucratic property insured rapid economic growth, and thanks to this the remaining classes and social strata within the bureaucratic system had real possibilities of improving their lot. Industrialization opened the road to an improved standard of living and to higher material, social, and cultural status. . . . [D]espite coercion and terror, the bureaucracy found enthusiastic support from groups in all social strata. Its power found social support; its ideologists and propagandists could effectively impose its hegemony on society at large, since the achievements of industrialization also meant the realization of a general social interest.[6]

It was this legacy of social support which, in the revolutionary situation generated by the 1956 workers' uprising in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Poznan, enabled the bureaucracy finally to tame the threat to its rule. In this situation the party found a "liberal" and "nationalist" leader, Gomulka, to implement reforms which took the form of important economic concessions and a real, but temporary and partial, democratization of society. The attempt to collectivize the peasantry was abandoned, and this was accompanied by a rapprochement with the Catholic church. Censorship was temporarily eased. The party-controlled trade unions underwent some degree of democratization but never succeeded in emancipating themselves from the party, which progressively regained control. By contrast the independent workers' councils which arose in 1956 were allowed to function freely for a certain period, although without any real power, but were gradually subordinated to the control of the unions and eventually suppressed.[7] It took more than two years for the party bureaucracy to re-establish its hegemony over society. This renewed hegemony, however, was bought at some financial cost: the period 1956-1959 saw a significant rise in the standard of living of the working class.

Far more than the fear of Soviet tanks, it was the reformist illusions both of the masses and of the radical intelligentsia which contributed to the failure of the 1956 revolution. As Kuron and Modzelewski wrote:

> At the decisive moment the left supported the liberal bureaucracy, the principal counter-revolutionary force. All the enormous authority which left militants enjoyed was transferred to the new leadership. Thus the left contributed to the maintenance in power of the bureaucracy and so prepared its own political death and the defeat of the revolution.[8]

One of the probable consequences of the collaboration of the left intelligentsia in the aftermath of the 1956 revolt was a considerable distrust of the intelligentsia as a whole on the part of the working class. This distrust was exploited by the regime to great effect in 1968. When in March of that year students and intellectuals confronted the authorities with street demonstrations on the issue of censorship and cultural freedom, their desperate appeals to the workers to strike in sympathy were largely unheeded. The regime was able to concoct a sufficiently potent mixture of anti-Semitic, anti-intellectual, and chauvinist

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

propaganda to disorient the working class and so prevent any significant response. The protests of the intelligentsia were severely repressed; several thousand Jews and intellectuals were forced to emigrate; and many of the leaders of the protests, including Kuron and Modzelewski, were given prison sentences.

The period between 1969 and 1976 represented the nadir of the intellectual opposition. Many activists emigrated or abandoned politics. Revisionism was discredited, but so too was the revolutionary program of Kuron and Modzelewski. Many former radicals abandoned Marxism and sought refuge in a rapprochement with the church; their political ideas reflected a deep social pessimism, distrust of mass political movements, and a retreat into religious moralism. Some, such as Kuron, while claiming to remain faithful to their original socialist values, put forward strangely eclectic and ambiguous proposals as to the best methods of attempting to realize those values.[9]

It is difficult when reading the political writings of Polish oppositionists during the years after 1968 not to be struck by the conceptual confusion and intellectual timidity of most of it. There is a strong impression of self-censorship: the most fundamental questions about the future organization of society are taboo, as if to evoke the possibility of change were to preclude it.[10]

The remarkable demoralization of the intelligentsia in this period is evidenced by its complete failure to react to the massive strikes in Gdansk which toppled Gomulka in 1970, or to the subsequent massacre of hundreds of workers. Furthermore the prolonged repression of worker militants which followed Gierek's accession to power elicited no significant solidarity from the intelligentsia. It was only in 1976 when a second powerful wave of strikes led to further repression that a movement of solidarity arose amongst the intelligentsia. It was this movement and the activities it inspired which played so important a catalytic role in the events of August 1980.

The Church

Probably no aspect of contemporary Poland is so generally misunderstood as the role of religion, not least by many Polish intellectuals.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The enormous ideological force of the Catholic church, rooted in the overwhelmingly agrarian prewar economy, prevented the Communist regime from destroying its existence as an independent institution in the years before 1956. Although the church was in this period deeply tied to the *ancien régime* and, following the directives of the papacy, militantly crusaded against Communist ideology, after 1956 church and party agreed on their mutual interest in reaching a certain *modus vivendi.*[11] The state ceased its formal harassment of the church, and allowed the teaching of Catholic doctrine and the publication of journals by the liberal Catholic intelligentsia such as *Znak* and *Wiez,* which were subject to considerably less stringent censorship than the rest of the Polish press. In return an important section of the Catholic intelligentsia provided qualified support for Gomulka, and the group surrounding *Znak* was in consequence allowed a small representation in the Polish parliament. In practice this group acted as a loyal, if largely extraparliamentary, opposition. The more conservative church hierarchy, led by Cardinal Wyszynski, consoled themselves in the period of Gomulka's rule by looking upon the existing form of society as a temporarily irreversible historical aberration.

A subtle but fundamental change in the relationship between the church and its congregation has, however, taken place in the course of Poland's postwar history. In order to understand this, it is necessary to be aware of the extraordinary socio-economic transformation which Poland has undergone in the last 35 years. In this period Poland has been transformed from a predominantly agrarian country to a modern industrial power. In 1938 some 60 percent of the working population were engaged in agriculture; by 1980 this figure had fallen to 23 percent. Today the industrial proletariat is by far the largest single class in Poland, and in terms of industrial production Poland is the tenth industrial power in the world.[12] Yet this process of industrialization and consequent urbanization of society has not been accompanied by the decline of religion usually characteristic of such changes. This is because, whatever the actual politics of the episcopate, owing to the church's privileged "independence" from the state the symbolism of religion has become the unique language capable of expressing ideas of social

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

emancipation; it is a language symbolizing at once the continuity of the Polish cultural heritage, the ancient struggle for national independence, and the self-identity of the individual in a world of social relations dominated by the state.

The power of this symbolism was evident in the extraordinary mass political catharsis induced by the election of Karol Wojtyla as Pope and his subsequent triumphal tour of his homeland; for several days the major cities of Poland lived in a carnival-like atmosphere. A whole generation experienced for the first time a feeling of collective power and exaltation of which they had never dreamt. The party apparatus with its omnipresent tentacles stretching into every corner of society appeared in this brief historic moment as a mere cobweb. If religion in prewar Poland was the opium of the people, it became in this moment the "heart of a heartless world."[13]

In the wake of the profound economic changes in postwar Poland, there developed a real change in the social content of religion. This was accompanied by the rise amongst the new urban masses of a strong current of *subconscious protestantism.* The failure of the church hierarchy to adapt its rigid orthodoxy to the radically changed social conditions led urban Catholics of all classes to reject those aspects of religious dogma which they found intolerable, while in no way allowing this rejection to weaken their religious faith. This phenomenon is reflected in contemporary attitudes toward such questions as divorce, contraception, and sexual mores, which are similar to those prevailing in most Protestant countries of Northern Europe. At the same time the decline of episcopal authority combined with the continuing power of religious symbolism led to a proliferation of many small groups of radical Catholic intellectuals espousing diverse beliefs, often imported from other cultures. The emergence of this Catholic underground in the sixties and seventies and its interaction with the left intelligentsia has been one of the crucial factors in the development of an intellectual opposition since 1968. However, this collaboration has been more fruitful at a practical than an ideological level. In practical politics it has been conducted according to the principle of *absolute solidarity in the face of a totalitarian power,* but at a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

theoretical level it has not led to the creation of a common language capable of overcoming the phenomenon of conceptual embezzlement. Doubtless intellectuals from both traditions are wary of ideological polemics which could needlessly reopen wounds from the struggles of previous generations.

Ironically, just as a radical Catholic intelligentsia was beginning to make its appearance, the Catholic hierarchy itself shifted perceptibly toward a position of full accommodation to the existing regime. During the period of Gierek's rule in the seventies, pleased by Gierek's less hostile attitude to the church and sensing that a return to capitalism was becoming increasingly improbable, the episcopate began to realize that church and state had a considerable common interest. Thus the church's traditional commitment to nationalism, to the preservation of the patriarchal family structure, and to the values of hard labor and social humility accorded excellently with the political need of the state to maintain an atomized and politically docile population. Indeed it has often been useful for official propaganda to have a "non-Marxist" source of authority to voice ideas which are awkward to express in Marxist terminology.[14]

The sudden wave of strikes in 1970 and the subsequent repression placed the church hierarchy in a difficult position. They did not wish to jeopardize their new relationship with the state, but they could not afford to ignore the appeals of the working class for fear of losing their authority. Their solution was to issue statements criticizing the economic decisions taken by the government and the police repression, but making clear their disapproval of strikes and emphasizing the duty of all citizens to work harder "for the 'common good' and to maintain order in society."[15]

A similar pattern occurred in August 1980. At the height of the strike in Gdansk, Cardinal Wyszynski appeared on television to declare: "When there is no work the best economic system will fall in ruins." In an extraordinary homily on the subject of honest work, Wyszynski made a clear appeal to the workers to moderate their demands and abandon their strike. Significantly, this speech did not have any influence on the strikers at all.[16]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Workers Revolt: 1970-1980

It will probably be left to a future generation of historians, whose roots are in the working class itself, to document the Promethean struggle of the Polish workers to achieve political consciousness in the ten years between December 1970 and August 1980. It would be hard for the present generation of the intelligentsia to record this hidden process, since until 1976 they played no part in it.

The strikes in Gdansk and Szczecin in December 1970 had been provoked by years of austerity and a sudden and clumsy attempt by Gomulka to cut consumption by increasing the prices of basic foods. But the workers, although distrustful of the party, had not yet lost the illusion that the system was *capable* of operating in their interests. This is strikingly illustrated by the fact that a majority of the freely elected workers' delegates in the Szczecin shipyards during the 1970 strike were party members.[17] Yet the burning of hundreds of party cards during the sacking of the party's regional headquarters was the symbolic beginning of working-class emancipation from the party. It was only from 1970 onward that non-party worker activists began to appear in significant numbers, their ranks swelling rapidly after the new wave of strikes in 1976.

The 1970 revolt which swept Gomulka from power and led to the installation of Gierek in his place inaugurated a period of "totalitarianism with a human face." Although Gierek could no more afford to allow any real democratization of factory life than Gomulka, he realized that without substantial economic concessions and some pretense at "consultation," the explosion of discontent could not be contained.[18] Between 1971 and 1975 the standard of living of the working class increased rapidly. But Gierek did not keep his promise to the workers of the Szczecin shipyards to allow them to form an independent workers' commission; by the use of a combination of violent intimidation and corruption, the workers' representation in the shipyards was very soon broken up. In practice "consultation" meant nothing more than an increase in the number of lectures by high party functionaries to factory audiences.

The boom economy of the first half of the decade, financed by massive loans from Western capital, ended suddenly in 1976.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Polish industry, hopelessly inefficient by Western standards, was incapable of producing economically the kind of high-quality manufactured goods which could be exported to the West in order to pay the interest on the loans.[19] Instead the government exported badly needed foods. But when the government tried, on June 25, 1976, to raise prices in order to counteract shortages on the internal market, there was a spontaneous wave of strikes and riots. On the same evening, the prime minister appeared on television to announce that the price increases had been annulled. Writing in 1977 Kuron noted acidly:

> Totalitarianism with a human face is founded on the deception that the regime has something to give in exchange for the obedience of society. In fact, however, it yields only that which society extracts by its disobedience. This deception can no longer be continued. The political crisis which we are experiencing and which manifests itself as a paralysis of the regime is caused by the bankruptcy of the methods of rule which have been used since 1957.[20]

This evident paralysis of the regime in the face of mass pressure, together with some particularly outrageous amendments to the Polish constitution in the autumn of 1975, finally galvanized the intelligentsia into renewed activity. A letter signed by 59 prominent intellectuals, protesting the changes to the constitution, proposed in their place a quite different set of amendments, amongst which are to be found both the right to strike and "a guarantee that workers may freely elect their own professional representative bodies, independent of the party and the state."[21] In September 1976, in response to the continuing severe repression against workers who had taken part in the June strikes, a group of some dozen intellectuals formed a "Committee for the Defense of the Workers" (known as KOR).

From the outset KOR did not strive to play the role of a political party; its initial purpose was to provide aid to persecuted workers and their families. Nevertheless in the four years of its existence KOR has played an extraordinary role as a political catalyst, a role bearing little relationship to the size of its membership (now about thirty).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the wider milieu of students and intellectuals who collaborated with KOR in collecting and distributing funds for the families of imprisoned workers, there quickly sprang up several groups engaged in more overtly political activities. Illegal underground literature, known collectively as *bibula,* mushroomed everywhere; a "flying university" was organized in which dissident intellectuals gave lectures in private homes on a wide variety of subjects whose objective study was impossible in official institutions of learning. Among the many underground publications, a special significance belongs to the pamphlet *Robotnik* (The Worker) the first issue of which appeared in September 1977. This newssheet, launched by a group of KOR's collaborators, was directed specifically to the working class and rapidly gained the active participation of many workers in its production and distribution. Even though its circulation never exceeded a few tens of thousands, it provided a vital information link for the whole workers' movement. Out of the hundreds of worker militants who were drawn into the web of activity around *Robotnik* there coalesced several independent local foci. One such was formed by a group in Gdansk in April 1978, designating themselves "The Founding Committee of the Baltic Free Trade Union." The historic importance of this group may be judged from the fact that it included at least five of the nineteen members of the presidium of the inter-enterprise strike committee in August 1980, one of whom was Lech Walesa.

The reaction of the regime to the spate of underground activity generated by KOR and its offshoots was two-pronged; in general it treated dissident intellectuals with mild intolerance and worker militants with exemplary brutality. The members of the politbureau had read enough of Marx to be aware that an alliance of the working class and the intelligentsia would be fatal. They no longer had the means to buy the workers' acquiescence, but they hoped to retain the support of at least a part of the intelligentsia. In November 1976, fearing an explosion, a group of prominent party intellectuals, together with some liberal non-party intellectuals, formed an unofficial caucus, *DIP,* which was critical of government policies.[22] Its aim was to explore all possible avenues for averting the debacle ahead. It was too late.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The August Explosion and the International Conjuncture

Gentlemen! You are talking to different people! You are not addressing those who in December 1970 replied to the question "Will you help us?" with the answer "We will!"

We are different above all because we are united and no longer powerless.

We are different because thirty years have taught us that your promises are not kept.

Strike Bulletin, *Solidarnosc,* August 27, 1980

At 6:00 a.m. on August 14th the workers of departments K1 and K3 of the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk put down their tools. They had two modest demands: the re-employment of Anna Walentynowicz, a particularly popular militant who had been sacked for her underground activities in the Baltic Free Trade Union; and a wage rise of 1,000 zlotys. On that morning was born an elemental force, a movement which has grown with measured deliberation, burrowing under and sweeping aside all that stands in its way.

Viewed from a distance, the dynamics of this movement remain invisible; it is tempting to judge a social movement by the pronouncements of its leaders. Yet in a revolutionary process the leaders are often conducting a *fuite en avant*; some who cannot keep up the pace are left behind and are at once replaced by others. Such is the situation in Poland today.

Two days after the beginning of the strike in the Lenin shipyard Lech Walesa proposed to the strikers that, in view of the director's capitulation to the original demands, the strike be ended. This proposal was accepted and the director informed. Shortly afterward a young woman among the workers who were still congregating in the shipyard cried out that workers in other enterprises who had struck in sympathy had been betrayed by this decision, since their own demands had not been satisfied. Her impassioned speech created a furor and, sensing the mood of the workers, Walesa annulled the decision to end the strike.

Two weeks later, when the strike movement had spread to the whole country and a final agreement on the formation of an independent union was being negotiated in the Lenin shipyard, the government made a last-minute attempt to divide

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the working class from the intelligentsia by agreeing to all the workers' demands except the liberation of political prisoners, most of whom were associated with KOR. The presidium of the strike committee, under the influence of some liberal intellectual advisers from Warsaw, wavered on this last question. The intellectuals believed that the government would not yield on this point and that to insist on it would be to court disaster. The problem was resolved by violent arguments between the presidium and the strikers' delegates. The meeting finally demanded the unconditional release of all political prisoners. The prisoners were released.[23]

These incidents attending the birth of *Solidarity,* hardly noted by the international press, typify a pattern of radicalization from below which has been repeated at every stage in the development of the vast social movement now engulfing Poland. It would be difficult to find in history examples of a ruling class more bereft of social support than the Polish political bureaucracy today. Finally denuded of its ideology, it can only watch impotently as ever wider sections of society mobilize against it. With the obstinacy of a child playing in the tide, the regime places one obstacle after another in the path of the revolution: each in turn is swept away in a fresh wave of radicalization from below. Since there is no major social class to which it can turn for support, the regime is reduced to attempting to co-opt sections of the leadership of *Solidarity* while issuing thinly veiled threats of Soviet intervention. But mass pressure is at present so intense that the more conservative leaders of *Solidarity* cannot retain their influence if they ignore this pressure, while threats of intervention have been used too often to be effective with an increasingly militant and self-confident working class. Furthermore there is no case in recorded history of a social revolution which, once in train, has been halted by threats.

The principal political advisers to the leadership of *Solidarity* today come from three different groups: KOR, the liberal Catholic intelligentsia, and the episcopate. Conscious of the threat of Soviet invasion, almost all are attempting desperately to define the limits of the revolution. Widely differing conceptions of these limits have already led to serious signs of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

strain in this conjunctural alliance. From the perspective of Kuron, who is a founding member of KOR and whose ideas have great influence among the activists of the democratic movement, the fundamental limits which must not be crossed in the present historical phase are determined by the necessity to preserve party dominance over the central administration, the police forces, and the army, i.e., the institutional framework of state collectivism. Kuron believes that within these limits the democratic movement must struggle for autonomy in every other sphere of social life. He argues that the dynamic of the revolution can only be contained if these limits are clearly defined in advance. This historic compromise, of indefinite duration, would be based on a general consciousness by the Polish people of its provisional necessity.[24]

The influence of the episcopate is of a far more conservative variety. Paradoxically, the collapse of the party's control over society and the sudden appearance of mass lay social movements have lessened the political authority of the church. On the other hand, by preaching moderation the church has much to gain; in return for an attempt by the episcopate to institutionalize and bureaucratize *Solidarity,* and thereby stem the growing radicalization of the base, the regime would certainly be prepared to grant enormously increased influence to the church. In effect, this is the last ideological trick available to the regime which could thus cover the process of normalization by a drastic modification of its ideology. The signs of a rift between the church and the democratic movement were already evident in December when the press representative of the episcopate told foreign journalists that in his opinion the authorities would be justified in arresting certain "troublemakers" and cited Kuron as an example.[25]

Is Kuron's compromise possible? It seems doubtful. Even if the theoretical construct *state collectivism with a socialist face* proved to be internally stable, the example this would set to the other peoples of Eastern Europe would be too powerful to allow the revolution to be contained within Poland's borders. Whether or not the Soviet Union were to invade Poland in consequence, the Polish example would rapidly lead to a revolutionary crisis in the entire Soviet bloc. It seems possible therefore that the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Soviet Union will intervene before this point is reached. But this is by no means certain. Attacked on all fronts and desperately weak internally, the Soviet regime has no rational policy in the present crisis. The consequences of intervention and of non-intervention are equally disastrous. In this respect there is no comparison with the situations in 1956 or 1968.

The strategy of the Western powers in the present crisis is not hard to discern through the clouds of official hypocrisy concerning the demands of the Polish workers—demands which in some instances have never been acceded to in the advanced capitalist countries. If the dynamic of the revolution is not halted by ideological subterfuge, then the present confrontation will lead *either* to a brutal invasion and prolonged chaos in Eastern Europe *or* to a socialist revolution in several East European countries, including perhaps the Soviet Union itself. Neither of these possibilities is in the interests of Western capital. While both possibilities would involve huge losses on loans to Poland and incalculable consequences for the stability of Europe, the second possibility would also destroy the vision of Communism which is the cornerstone of Western ideology and would give a powerful new impetus to the left in Western Europe.

In accordance with the Sonnenfeldt doctrine[26] elaborated in the early seventies, the Western alliance is using the full weight of its economic and ideological power to attempt to preserve the existing mode of production in Poland, while using the weakness of the Soviet Union to increase its own economic penetration. This strategy is evidenced both by the large new loans which have been made to the Kania government and by the incessant propaganda for the Catholic church in the statements of politicians and in the radio broadcasts beamed to Poland.

The economic role of the West in the genesis of the present crisis is little known.[27] Some 40 percent of Poland's trade is with industrialized capitalist countries. The estimated $25 billion which Poland today owes to the West was a few years ago described by bankers as a "dream investment." Indeed the financial terms which the West obtained from Poland in the seventies compared favorably with those negotiated with many

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Third World countries.[28] It is not difficult to see the advantages for a banker of a situation in which the brutal labor discipline necessary for the extraction of surplus value of this order is entirely the responsibility of a repressive apparatus which is called Communist. A little-remarked fact is that the consumer price "reforms" last year which triggered the first strikes in Poland in July were demanded by Western bankers as a condition for the provision of additional loans.[29]

It is easy to understand the unease of the world's rulers. No single event of recent history has so starkly illuminated the moral decadence and internal contradictions of the ideologies of both the world's dominant powers. Perhaps it is the peculiar historical fate of the Poles to expose the hypocrisy of ideologues. According to Marx, the first political revolt to advance socialist demands occurred in Cracow in 1846. Writing a hundred years ago, he remarked: "From that moment onwards all the mendacious sympathies of the wealthy of Europe were directed toward Poland."[30]

NOTES

1. This formulation of the dogmas of Marxism-Leninism is due to L. Kolakowski: "Thèses sur l'espoir et le désespoir," in *La Pologne: une société en dissidence* (Paris, 1978).
2. *Ibid.*
3. One of the first and most original thinkers to adopt this thesis was Bruno Rizzi in *La Burocratisation du monde* (Paris, 1939). Unfortunately this work has not been reprinted, and is available only in Italian. East European analyses adopting this standpoint include the *Open Letter* of Kuron and Modzelewski (see note 5) and *Le Marxisme face aux pays de l'est,* by M. Rakovski (Paris 1977). Related theses are those of Umberto Melotti, *Marx and the Third World* (London, 1978); and Rudolf Bahro, *The Alternative* (London and New York, 1978). A good analytical survey of possible theoretical positions is contained in *The Century of the Unexpected,* by John Fantham and Moshe Machover (London: Big Flame, 1979).
4. Among the many well-known intellectuals who belonged to the revisionist current were the philosopher L. Kolakowski and the economists W. Brus and O. Lange.
5. J. Kuron and K. Modzelewski, *List Otwarty do PZPR* (1965), published in French as *Lettre ouverte au Parti ouvrier unifié polonais* (Paris: Maspero, 1965).
6. *Ibid.*
7. An interesting historical account of the role of the unions in this period is contained in *Le syndicalisme en Europe de l'est,* Docu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mentation Française (Notes et études documentaires) NN3923/4/5 (Paris, 1972).

8. Kuron and Modzelewski, *op. cit.*
9. Kuron, "Mysli o programie dzialania," *Aneks* 13-14 (1977). A French version of this article appears in *La Pologne, op. cit.*
10. An important reason for this taboo is the traditional antagonism of Marxism and Catholicism, discussed in the next section.
11. In 1949 the Vatican had issued a decree barring Catholics from supporting Communist parties and from reading Communist publications.
12. *Le Monde* (January 25, 1981). Furthermore the regime's disastrous agricultural policy has caused the younger peasants to migrate to the cities en masse. Today the remaining peasant population is elderly: 80 percent are over forty.
13. Characteristically this second half of Marx's brilliant epigram is quite unknown in Poland: it has no place in official doctrine.
14. A good example is provided by Gierek's notoriously reactionary views on the subject of women. Addressing Polish women in 1977 he noted: "A particularly important social function of women is motherhood, the organization of family life, and the stressing of the social value of the family. . . . In your hands is the happiness of Polish families, the future of our children, and the future of our nation." *Trybuna Ludu* (August 3, 1977).
15. Communiqué of the 154th Congress of the Polish episcopate (October 9, 1976).
16. The text of Wyszynski's speech is in *Slowo Powszechne* (August 29, 1980). Wyszynski also made some remarks critical of the government which were censored in the televised version of his speech. When the strikers at Gdansk learnt of this the next day, they assumed that they had been tricked about the rest of the content. But in fact the full text did not alter the sense of the remarks directed at the strikers.
17. Boleslaw Sulik, "Les Ouvriers," in *La Pologne, op. cit.*
18. A transcript of the tape-recording of the remarkable confrontation between Szczecin shipyard workers and the leadership of the Communist Party in January 1971 is in *New Left Review* 72 (1972).
19. According to CIA sources, by 1979 92 percent of Poland's hard currency export earnings was being spent on interest and repayment of principal on its loan. See "What the Bankers Did to Poland," in *Fortune* (September 9, 1980).
20. Kuron, *op cit.* (note 9). For an excellent article on the development of the Polish crisis between 1970 and 1976, see "Third Round in Poland," by Peter Green, *New Left Review* 101-102 (1977).
21. Kuron, *ibid.*
22. DIP: Doswiadczenie i Przyszlosc (Experience and the Future).
23. The entire daily bulletin, *Solidarnosc,* of the Gdansk strikers in August 1980 has been published in French in *L'Alternative* No. 8 (1981). The above account is taken partly from *Solidarnosc* and partly from eyewitnesses.
24. *Robotnik* 68/69. A translation of Kuron's article can be found in *The Tablet* (January 1981). See also an interview with Kuron in *L'Alternative* 8.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

25. *The Tablet, op. cit.*
26. Sonnenfeldt was an aide of Kissinger. The doctrine according to which the West should use its influence to stabilize the existing East European regimes caused some controversy. But in fact it merely formalized what was already *de facto* policy.
27. For economic data on the weight of Poland's economic dependence on the West, see *Le Monde Diplomatique* (October 1980).
28. *Fortune, op. cit.* (note 19).
29. *Ibid.*
30. K. Marx, "Letter to a Meeting in Geneva Called to Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Polish Revolution of 1830."

Religious suffering is the *expression* of real suffering and at the same time the *protest* against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people.

The abolition of religion as people's *illusory* happiness is the demand for their *real* happiness. The demand to abandon illusions about their condition is a *demand to abandon a condition which requires illusions.* The criticism of religion is thus *in embryo a criticism of the vale of tears* whose *halo* is religion.

—Karl Marx, *Toward the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law: Introduction*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SOCIALISM, DEMOCRACY, AND PLANNING:

REMARKS AT A CONFERENCE

BY HARRY MAGDOFF

Ever since 1976, annual conferences (called Round Tables) have been held in Cavtat, Yugoslavia, on various themes related to socialism. These are sponsored by two Yugoslav journals, *Socialism in the World* and *Marxism in the World,* which invite participants from over 50 countries. The theme of the most recent Round Table (September 22 to 27, 1980) was "Participation, Self-Management, and Socialism." The following is an edited version of two interventions made on some of the main topics of debate at the conference.

—The Editors

Democracy and Socialism

The participants in this year's Round Table seem to be in full agreement as long as the discussion remains at the most abstract level: everyone is in favor of both socialism and democracy. But, as might be expected, the sharpest of differences emerge when we descend from the very abstract to the very concrete. The line of demarcation that has thus far been drawn is between self-management at the enterprise level and centralized planning. Both sides of the debate insist that only their preferred method of operation insures both socialism and democracy. One side claims that centralized planning is incompatible with democracy, while the other argues that reliance on self-management interferes with the building of socialism.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Unfortunately, neither side of the debate has fully and frankly dealt with the contradictions inherent in the process of building socialism as a transition from capitalism to communism nor with the consequent contradictions between socialism and democracy. It seems to me, moreover, that by narrowing the debate to the sole question of self-management vs. central planning, the more basic issues have been ignored: What kind of socialism is to be constructed? To what extent are the workers and farmers to be involved in determining the answer to that question? How are conflicts of interest between different sectors of the society to be resolved?

Depending on how these questions are dealt with, the distinctions thus far drawn may become seriously blurred: the most democratic self-management at the enterprise level does not guarantee democracy on overall social issues, nor does central planning necessarily exclude participation of the masses in determining the choice of social priorities or in realizing worker control over the labor process.

Because of the limited time available for this intervention, I will touch on only two of the problems which pertain to these questions and which have so far been neglected in the Round Table: difficulties arising from the way labor is allocated and the conflicts arising from distribution under conditions of scarcity.

The method of allocating labor to different production activities is a key feature that distinguishes one social system from another, being closely tied in with decisions on what is to be produced, how the surplus product is accumulated, and what is done with the surplus. Given that private ownership of the means of production and the profit motive are the decisive attributes of a capitalist society, it follows that the mechanism that assures the reproduction of the social relations and the national product is the market: the market for the sale and purchase of labor power and the market for the exchange of goods and services.

The market under capitalism has so deeply penetrated every aspect of social life that the ideology of the market place has become equally ingrained into people's consciousness. Thus, even though socialists are well aware of the relationship between

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

capitalism and its markets, many of them are nevertheless impressed with the presumed effectiveness of the market in bringing about equality in exchange-values and in balancing supply and demand—especially once the influence of capitalists is removed. What they tend to ignore is the degree to which market relations reflect an allocation of resources and methods of valuation that are historically determined, influenced by wars and other upheavals, state intervention to assist the growth and power of the ruling class, direct and indirect colonialism, hierarchical relations among nations, techniques of class exploitation, etc.

Because of these and other reasons, wages and prices are not necessarily rational, except insofar as they tend to reproduce the particular economic structure that evolved in each country. Thus, how transportation developed will affect transportation costs and regional distribution of economic activity. Who owns and controls raw-material sources (at home and abroad) will influence the availability and cost of these products. Likewise, the structure of agricultural production has an important bearing on the relation between food (and agricultural raw materials) and industrial prices. And just as there is no pure logic to a whole range of costs, neither is there to the price of labor power, and more particularly the differences in wage rates for different jobs. We tend to explain wage differentials as being due to variations in skill, education, etc. But these "explanations" are arrived at by hindsight. We tend to rationalize what exists, very much swayed by the psychological attitudes of a capitalist culture. That there is no overriding logic to wage differentials is most clearly seen in the contrasting levels of national wage rates, most especially in the wide gap between what is paid for equivalent work effort in Third World and in advanced capitalist countries. But even in the latter, wage differences have evolved as a result of particular historical influences—manipulation by employers to control the labor process and keep labor costs down, entrenched race, sex, and ethnic discrimination, and variations in profitability of different economic activities.

There is no time to explore all the facets of this question. What needs to be emphasized is that the objectivity of the capi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

talist market (where presumably equivalents are exchanged) resides in its effectiveness to reproduce capitalist social relations, and along with it the common attributes of such a society: inequities in income distribution, a production structure that cannot provide full employment, persistence of backward as well as advanced regions in even the most highly industrialized countries, and an allocation of labor that maximizes profits and not social welfare.

What then of the market in the process of socialist transition? A socialist government starts out by introducing radical changes designed to substitute social values for profit-maximizing as a guide to the allocation of resources. Nevertheless, the market has to be used, to a greater or lesser extent, as an instrument for exchange and distribution. Furthermore, fundamental aspects of the wage and price structure inherited from capitalism are necessarily incorporated in the economic framework used in the socialist transition.* And, in the absence of continuous and thoroughgoing changes in the role of the market, the influences of capitalist rationality and its accompanying psychological effects remain. Worse still, the strengthening of the market as a guide to economic decision-making produces phenomena that are characteristic of capitalism: the higher-income strata are favored over the lower-income; the better-endowed regions advance at the expense of the more backward areas; full employment becomes difficult to achieve; and differences among the people (intellectuals vs. manual workers, skilled vs. unskilled, farm vs. city) are perpetuated. Worker democracy at the enterprise level, important as it is, cannot cope with these more fundamental social problems; it is at best only a limited form of democracy.

At the heart of the economic difficulties and the issue of democracy under socialism is the problem of scarcity—a problem that affects both central planning and self-management.

* This is so for several reasons. A substitute set of complex economic arrangements requires extensive experimentation and cannot be created overnight. Nor can traditions supported by deep-seated hierarchical relations and attitudes be lightly overturned. And, finally, participation in the world market, whether by choice or necessity, imposes limits on internal prices and wages.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Under conditions of scarcity, two basic problems have to be answered: What priorities should be established in deciding what is to be produced? How are the available supplies to be distributed? Behind these questions lie a score of others: How does one define what is basic and what luxury? Should all the basic needs be satisfied before undertaking the production of luxuries? How does one balance meeting immediate needs against investing for a more prosperous future? If there is not enough produced and constructed to go around, how and to whom are the limited supplies to go?

It should be obvious that scarcity is the breeding ground of inequality and of conflicts of interest between sections of the population and between regions. And it is precisely here that the issue of democracy in a socialist society should be located. If the answers to these questions are made solely from the top and then embedded in the institutions of the society, then there is no democracy. This method of operation—common to both centrally planned and self-management economies—generates privileged strata and creates the breeding ground of deep corruption.

Socialist democracy can only mean, as I see it, an open and frank confrontation of the existence of conflicts of interest as well as a recognition that alternative plans of development are possible. Furthermore, if the masses are to participate in resolving the issues in question, they must be fully informed of the available facts and able to hold their leaders accountable. It may be argued that the masses do not have the knowledge and the training to cope intelligently with all the complexities of statistics, technology, practical constraints, etc., involved in evaluating economic programs. This is undoubtedly true. But then they never will have unless they begin to engage in open debate, are made aware of the controversies taking place within the leadership, and have a basis for judging the success or failure of adopted programs. In sum, without *real* mass participation on the fundamental issues of socialist development there is no *real* democracy. Restricting the debate to self-management vs. central planning skirts what, in my opinion, is most important.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Planning Under Capitalism and Socialism

Two questions came up at this panel as well as in the general discussion that I think need further exploring. One is the idea that the existence of planning in capitalist societies demonstrates the necessity of socialist planning. The second concerns self-management in capitalist and socialist societies.

I

In general, there are five types of planning under capitalism:

(1) *Planning within the large corporation.* This refers to planning internal to the enterprise aimed at maximizing profits and controlling markets and sources of raw materials. Some of this planning involves advanced and complex techniques of control over inventories and the process of production designed to reduce costs. Equally important is the internal planning of finance in order to get the best return on available cash, acquire other companies, and shift capital from less to more profitable activities. Finally, planning is conducted to manipulate consumer markets and to control raw material and other supplies. Corporate planning, in other words, is concerned with strengthening the monopoly position and profits of the corporation. It has absolutely no relevance to what the aims and methods of socialist planning should be. That is not to say that there may not be statistical and mathematical techniques used by the corporation which might be useful in the technical aspects of socialist planning.

(2) *Regional planning.* This has to do with such matters as water supply, sewage systems, power supplies, telephone systems, and the like. Such planning is needed in every society. But even here, there is considerable difference between regional planning in capitalist and socialist societies. Regional planning in capitalist societies is constrained, and indeed molded, by the interest of real-estate developers, construction companies, utilities firms, transportation networks, etc.

(3) *National planning in time of war.* This involves active direction by the state in restricting certain types of nonessential production, directing resources to the making of mili-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tary goods, controlling the use of raw materials, etc. This type of planning comes closest to some of the technical aspects of planning under socialism. But it nevertheless differs in its essentials, since production is still under the control of capitalists and is geared to profit-making, the capital/labor relations remain the same, and the planning ends with the conclusion of the war.

(4) *National planning in time of peace.* There are at root two uses of capitalist national planning. One is to promote the expansion of monopoly capital. The other is to protect monopoly capital in time of crisis. The objective in both cases is to strengthen monopoly capital by a combination of actions by the state, such as investing in research and development to provide new or better products for corporate use; granting of subsidies; coordinating export drives; providing loans to near-bankrupt firms; encouraging (or forcing) mergers. In no conceivable way does this type of planning have any resemblance to socialist planning.

(5) *International planning.* I would not have included this category but for the fact that a previous speaker cited international planning by capitalist nations as evidence of the need for and the desirability of socialist central planning. In fact, international planning does not and cannot exist as long as capitalist nations struggle for power. International conferences do of course take place, as do consultations between leaders and central bankers. These meetings are more often than not designed to deal with the question of international money. On that I can do no better than to quote the observation of a senior economist of Exxon Corporation (formerly Standard Oil of New Jersey): "We may ask why, after a hundred years of international monetary conferences, men still have not resolved their differences. The answer lies in one word—*power*. That is what one hundred years of international monetary conferences have been about." At times in capitalist history, perhaps especially so in the early decades following the Second World War, attempts have been made at cooperative solutions of money and trade conflicts, the most successful of these occurring when an undisputed hegemonic power ruled the roost. Whatever cooperation is achieved, however, dissolves during times of strain and crisis into struggle among competing trade and currency blocs.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

International conferences and cooperation among leading capitalist nations do take place for still another reason, the purpose being to work together to keep the Third World in line as participants in the imperialist system and as sources of exploitation. But it is hard to see how the relations among capitalist nations can in any way be put under the rubric of international planning. And surely whatever cooperation is temporarily achieved by these power-hungry, predatory, and competitive nations can hardly instruct us on the need for socialist planning.

II

Just as it is important to keep clearly in mind the distinction between capitalist and socialist planning, it is even more so to avoid identifying the role of self-management, or worker participation in management, in the two systems. There is a long history of struggle by workers to exert influence on the labor process. This has been part of the class struggle in capitalist societies, notably resistance to the speed-up, the stretch-out, and heavy-handed supervision by management. Strikes and mass movements designed to gain greater control by workers on their jobs have over the years yielded one form or another of success. By the same token, it is important to recognize that capitalists have found various ways to circumvent workers' victories, so that the struggle to maintain or re-establish gains is ever with us. More recently, efforts have been launched to raise the class struggle to the level of winning self-management by workers in the factories. But it should be understood that even if the movement for self-management achieves certain successes, it will only be an improvement, most likely a small one, within the framework of the exploitation of labor by capital. The laws of motion of capitalism will still prevail.

We have also heard at the Round Table talk about worker participation in management as a progressive step forward toward socialism. Here we face an area where myths and illusions dominate. It must never be forgotten that worker participation in the management of a capitalist firm will not change the nature of the firm. There is nothing that a worker management can do to bring about a basic change in the way the firm operates. The reason is that workers will face the same reality as do

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

capitalist managers: problems of selling the product, the business cycle, domestic and international competition—to name only a few. Above all, worker managers would have to bend their efforts to enlarge profits of the firm, if only to protect the firm against the risks faced by any capitalist enterprise. Worker participation in management could conceivably obtain some concessions, such as better health care, improved ventilation and lighting, etc. These and similar improvements are no small matters for the workers in many situations. But to imagine that such participation will change the lot of the worker, let alone the society, is a grand illusion.

THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

In the generation of nuclear energy, manmade hazards seem unavoidable, but bankruptcy strikes us as a needless risk.

—From an article on Three Mile Island in *Barron's*, March 23, 1981.

new from **Monthly Review Press**

THE DEEPENING CRISIS OF U.S. CAPITALISM:

ESSAYS BY HARRY MAGDOFF AND PAUL M. SWEEZY

In this volume, a collection of articles published in **Monthly Review** from 1977 through 1980, the authors probe the dilemma of capitalism in the recent period, and hitherto little-treated economic developments which today exert a strong influence on the global crisis. A new and substantial introduction ties together the main threads running through the book. What emerges is a perception of a continuing and deepening sickness of the system that bears all the symptoms of an incurable disease.

CLOTHBOUND $16.00/£8 • 65 CL5732
PAPERBACK $6.50/£3 • 55 PB5740

add $1.00 when ordering by mail

62 West 14th St., New York, N.Y. 10011 / 47 Red Lion St., London WC1R 4PF

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DO YOUR STUDENTS SHOW POOR INTEREST IN MARX?

Try a book they can understand:

MARX AND HISTORY by Ross Gandy

"High school students would have little difficulty with the narrative."—THE HISTORY TEACHER
"Full of challenging ideas."—HISTORY OF POLITICAL ECONOMY
"Anyone interested in Marx need hunt no longer for a book to recommend to students."
—PHILOSOPHY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH
"Serious and scholarly."—THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS
"Smoothly written."—JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC HISTORY
"Correcting widespread misconceptions."—JOURNAL OF POLITICS
"The social democrats' ruling interpretation of Marx is destroyed forever."—LOS UNIVERSITARIOS, National University of Mexico

University of Texas Press **Austin 78712** **201 pages, $14.95**

RIPEH/The Review of Iranian Political Economy and History (ISSN 0148-6101) is a semi-annual research journal of articles, book reviews, translated documents, news chronology, and bibliography. The scope of the journal includes Iran, the Middle East (West Asia), and the Third World.

L. Helfgott, "Iran: Capitalist Society on the Periphery"
A. Enayat, "The Problem of Imperialism in Nineteenth Century Iran"
B. Mu'mini, "Iran on the Eve of the Constitutional Revolution"
Y. Parsa Benab, "Tabriz in Perspective: A Historical Analysis of the Current Struggle of Iranian Peoples"
T. Ricks, "Islamic Republic and Iran Today"
S. Royanian, "A History of Iranian Women's Struggles"

The purpose of **RIPEH** is to provide the English-speaking public with analyses of contemporary Iran's political economy and history in support of the Iranian people's struggle for independence and for Third World liberation movements in general. The background, nature and direction of the 1979 February Revolution will receive continual emphasis.

RIPEH
REVIEW of IRANIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY & HISTORY

NEW

Annual Subscription rates for Students are $6, for Regular subscribers $10, for Institutions $20. All newsstand and back issue rates are $2.50 per issue. Subscriptions outside the United States, Canada, or Mexico must add .50¢ for surface mail per issue or $2.00 for air mail per issue.

All correspondence, manuscripts, or subscriptions should be sent to the following address:
RIPEH, P. O. Box 961, Georgetown University, Washington, DC 20057

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CALL FOR PAPERS

Occasion: The First International Conference on the comparative historical and critical analysis of bureaucracy.

Place: Zurich, Switzerland.

Time: October 4th to 9th, 1982

Sponsor: The Gottlieb Duttweiller Institute for Economic and Social Studies.

SOME SUGGESTED THEMES:

Customary Authority vs. Bureaucracy
Contemporary Alternatives
Bureaucracy East and West: Archaic and Modern
Micro-electronics: The Bureaucratic Machine
The Bureaucratization of Culture
Latent and Manifest Functions of Bureaucracy

STEERING COMMITTEE: Prof. Stanley Diamond,
Editor, Dialectical Anthropology.
Chairman, Graduate Department of Anthropology, New School for Social Research.

Prof. Wolf Dieter Narr,
Faculty of Political Science,
Free University of Berlin.

Dr. Rolf Homann,
Institute Representative.

First Deadline: December 1981–January 1982

Papers should be sent in triplicate to: Dr. Rolf Homann

Gottlieb Duttweiller Institute
for Economic and Social
Studies
CH-8803 Ruschlikon
Zurich, Switzerland

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE WORLD CRISIS OF THE 1980s

AN INTERVIEW WITH SAMIR AMIN

The following interview—conducted by María de los Angeles Crummett, Graduate Faculty, New School for Social Research, New York, and Verónica Vilarespe, Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City—took place at the Sixth World Congress of Economists, Mexico City, in August 1980. The last answer was added in response to a question by the editors of MR on the occasion of a visit to New York by Samir Amin in March 1981.—Ed.

Q. *How would you define the present capitalist crisis?*

A. The present crisis is not an ordinary business-cycle decline; it is different from the past crises of the post-Second World War period. This one affects the structure of the capitalist economy and is of long duration. It started at the end of the sixties, extended into the seventies, and will probably continue through the eighties and perhaps even the nineties. Such a crisis should be considered more as a phase of development than as a typical, relatively short-lived cyclical decline.

If we look at the pattern of capitalist development since its origin, we find that it has gone through alternate phases of growth. To distinguish these phases we will label them A and B. A phases are characterized by long waves of relatively rapid growth that coincide with a fairly well-coordinated system of production, a stable international division of labor, and as a rule a firmly established hierarchy of nations. B phases, on the other hand, are distinguished by long waves of relatively slow

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

growth associated with an increasingly unstable structure of the world capitalist system: the social and class alliances that helped maintain the preceding stability begin to break up; international competition intensifies; the preceding hierarchical arrangements among nations is challenged; and consequently international alliances and the international division of labor are subject to change. These features of phase B are signs of a deep crisis, very different from the typical business-cycle decline. My opinion is that we are now in such a phase.

Although the current crisis can be viewed from many different angles, I think its most important feature is the series of changes in the international division of labor: between the North and the South; between the various countries of the North (the United States, Japan, and Western Europe); and between the West and the East (or the two Easts—the Soviets and the Chinese).

What characterized the preceding phase A (the roughly 25 years between 1944 and 1970-71) was the following: (1) The overwhelming hegemony of the United States over the whole capitalist system. This hegemony extended over the economic, military, political, and ideological fields. But I would stress the economic hegemony—that is, the overwhelming advantages that the U.S. economy had over its competitors in Western Europe and Japan. (2) The isolation of the East; its involvement in the international division of labor was limited and marginal. (3) An international division of labor between the North and the South that differed considerably from that of the old imperialism. By the latter I mean the period of colonialism from the end of the nineteenth century to the First World War, when the imperialist centers exercised indirect control in Latin America, China, and the Ottoman Empire, as well as direct political control over their possessions.

During the colonial period, the class alliances that ruled the dominated nations were generally between the nascent monopoly capital of the imperialist centers and a combination of local ruling classes, as, for example, between the latifundia oligarchy (typical of Latin America, the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and India), the feudals or semi-feudals, and the comprador

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bourgeoisie. In contrast, the pattern of class alliances characteristic of the second age of imperialism (1944 to 1970) was based on an alliance between monopoly capital and the local industrial state bourgeoisies: the private and state-created bourgeoisies that were linked to the neocolonial system and the import-substitution policies of industrialization.

I think that the foregoing phase A came to an end as a result of increasing contradictions at all levels. First, the West Europeans and the Japanese became equal competitors with the United States in the economic field, if not in the military. Japan and West Germany, in particular, not only caught up with the United States but forged ahead in precisely the fastest-growing industries. This resulted in a reversal of the relative comparative advantages in the foreign trade of the leading capitalist nations, a chronic deficit in the U.S. balance of payments, and a tendency to a surplus in the payments balances of West Germany and Japan. It is because of the pre-existing foreign-trade equilibrium that the crisis showed up first in the international monetary system and marked the end of U.S. hegemony in the economic field. Second, major changes occurred in the balance of political and military strength between the West and the East. The Soviet Union caught up with the armed might of the United States and hence emerged as a major military superpower on a level with the United States. And China, though economically backward, proved itself to be an independent power able to determine its own path of development and to use foreign policy to advance its chosen development strategy. Third, the South's policy of import-substitution industrialization came up against certain limits. This was especially so in the case of the so-called semi-industrialized countries of the South.

These structural changes which led to the present crisis signify that we are entering a period of major and growing conflicts at all levels: economic conflict among the advanced industrial nations; increasing military and political competition between the East and the West; growing political conflict between the North and the South; and of course increasing class struggles not only in the North but also in the weak links of the South.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Q. *You've talked about some of the most essential aspects of the capitalist crisis. How would you view the crisis as affecting the countries of the periphery vs. the countries of the core?*

A. In answering this question it is necessary to pay attention in the main to changes in the nature of the class alliances in the North and in the South. At various stages in the development of the imperialist system, the extra profits derived at the center from exploitation of the periphery made possible a kind of social concord in the North. The first such arrangement emerged with the old social democracy, when the revolutionary workers' movement of the first half of the nineteenth century evolved in the period prior to the First World War into a reformist labor movement. This was followed by a heating up of the class war in the North during the years from 1914 to 1945. This occurred as the world capitalist system entered a B phase, one that I would identify as a 30-year conflict between Germany and the United States for the succession to Great Britain as the hegemonic power. The intensification of the class struggle during that B phase led to a wide range of solutions, including the Russian Revolution, the Spanish and French Popular Fronts, pseudo-popular fronts such as Roosevelt's New Deal, and, at the other extreme, the fascist Nazi solution to the class struggle and the crisis.

If we then look at phase A during the 25 years following the Second World War, we again find a cooling off of the class struggle in the North—a period that resembled the social concord of the pre-First World War years rather than the politicized class struggles of the 1914-45 period. Since we are now entering a new phase of disruption of the system, I think it is not incorrect to envisage a new wave of politicization of class struggles in the North. After all, the objective conditions for such a development are created by the persistence of unemployment and the shift in political power to the right.

Of course, in the short run things seem to be quiet. In light of the absence of militant battles, it seems that the working class is for the time being accepting the high levels of unemployment, stagnation, and a decline in real wages. At the same time, the bourgeoisie throughout the North and, in some

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cases, even the middle strata are moving to the right. What is happening in the United States is typical. There the new petty bourgeoisie of intellectuals is moving in the direction of a neo-McCarthyism and possibly to some sort of neo-fascism adapted to U.S. conditions. Similar changes are taking place in Western Europe (especially in Germany) and in Japan. But in spite of these moves to the right, we should not exclude the likelihood of a radicalization of the class struggle in the North, since the crisis is bound to be long-lasting and the intensification of competition among the leading capitalist nations will create new economic and political tensions in the more vulnerable countries.

As for the South, it seems to me that what happened there in the past is perhaps more important than what is happening now. Previous B phases of the capitalist system—in the contemporary world, I am not going back to the seventeenth or eighteenth century—witnessed an upsurge of anti-imperialist struggles. These were in effect class struggles that grew out of the specific conditions of the periphery. In the main, the countries in the South are not industrialized. The bulk of the masses are found in the rural sector, where precapitalist structures are subordinated to and integrated with the capitalist system. Out of the peculiarities of these conditions, various types of anti-imperialist class alliances emerge in national liberation movements, depending on the phase of imperialism that exists when the crisis climaxes. Thus, previous waves of national liberation movements were at one time or another anti-United States, against the old colonialism of Europe and Japan, anti-feudal or anti-oligarchy, anti-latifundia, or anti-comprador bourgeoisie.

The balance of forces in the class alliances engaged in a particular anti-imperialist struggle influences the outcome, leading either to a socialist revolution, as in China and Vietnam, or to a new type of association with the imperialist system. In those countries where the national liberation movement did not lead to a socialist revolution we find the reinforcement of a national bourgeois state and the pursuit of import-substitution industrialization, supported by a class alliance generally consisting of the national bourgeoisie, some sectors of the petty bourgeoisie that were formerly in the anti-imperialist front, and a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

new class of kulaks that benefited from land reforms and the liquidation of the old oligarchies and the latifundia. In this way the national bourgeois power was consolidated and the radical working class, the poor peasants, and the marginalized unemployed were isolated.

It is precisely the class alliances at the head of the new bourgeois states in the periphery that are now being challenged. The ruling elites in these countries are proving themselves unable to master their national systems. They have not been able to sustain a high rate of growth and thereby to enlarge their class basis by creating opportunities for upward mobility of the petty bourgeoisie. Nor have they succeeded in getting overwhelming ideological support, since the pattern of modernization appears to the masses, notably in Africa and Asia, as a process of deculturation and Europeanization.

In this connection, the revolt in Iran is especially instructive. There the masses as a whole rebelled against the ruling class alliance with imperialism. It is very interesting to note that the Iranian revolution occurred in a period of very rapid growth and not during an economic crisis. Also noteworthy are the developments in such a large country as India, where the domination by the bourgeoisie and the administrative control by the Congress Party is disintegrating. My feeling is that this type of disintegration will develop on a large scale in Africa and Asia, and even perhaps in some parts of Latin America. After all, look at what happened in Nicaragua and what may be happening in El Salvador. There are also signs of the weakening of the ruling class alliance in Colombia.

This then is a period of a new wave in the South. We can still call it national liberation, but it is national liberation with a different class content. The motivating class forces this time are the poor peasants, exploited by the kulaks who profited from the Green Revolution, and the industrial working class which did not benefit from the previous period of growth. See, for example, the case of Brazil where the real wage declined by 40 percent during the entire period of high growth rate from the mid-sixties to the present. See also South Korea which has been frequently cited by the World Bank and others as an example of capitalist success and which is currently breaking

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

down. This new wave of national liberation is based on a class alliance that is anti-capitalist—one that is much more radical than the previous national liberation movements and therefore may lead to major social changes in various parts of the Third World.

Q. *As a result of the crisis many countries of the periphery have been demanding a new international economic order. What do you think of the NIEO? Within the NIEO what role do you see for raw materials, food, and energy?*

A. Yes, the NIEO is a consistent and logical program for getting out of the crisis that reflects the interests and views of the bourgeoisies of the South. It is a program of the international alliance of the ruling classes of the Third World that evolved from the previous period of growth—one that developed within an international division of labor based on import-substitution industrialization and an alliance between monopoly capital and the ruling bourgeoisies of the Third World. The content of the program is very simple to understand. It is designed to make possible a new wave of growth globally, entailing a new stage of industrialization in the South. The new industrialization would no longer be inward looking but would be based on exports that utilize the "advantages" of the South: cheap humanpower and abundant, cheap natural resources.

This program, if implemented, would indeed stimulate a new wave, a new A phase built on a new international class alliance and a new international division of labor in which the South would become an exporter of manufactured products to the North. This stems from the inability of the South's ruling classes to solve the basic problems of their economies, especially those of the rural areas, and their consequent emergence as major importers of agricultural products. The intention therefore is to reverse the classical pattern of imperialism: instead of being an exporter of agricultural products and an importer of manufactured goods the South is to become an exporter of manufactures and an importer of agricultural products. But even if this were to come about, the unequal relations between the center and the periphery would still remain. It is not the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

type of exports and imports that defines the nature of these relations. On the contrary, it is the social formation and the hegemonic class alliances in the different countries that ultimately determine who benefits and who loses from the international division of labor and the resulting international trade.

In my opinion, the perfectly logical and consistent NIEO program has very little chance of becoming adopted. It is not pure chance that explains why the whole series of so-called negotiations, such as the North-South dialogues and the UNCTAD conferences, have been complete failures. The reason is that the bourgeoisies of the South do not have sufficient strength to impose changes in the international economic order. As I see it, the international order is only the reflection of the relative degrees of strength at the national level. Only basic changes in the social structure and political power at the national level can influence in any significant way the international hierarchical structure. As long as no major social transformations occur in the South there is very little chance, if any, of changes in the balance of power at the international level.

The NIEO program merely reflects the contradictions between the weak bourgeoisies of the South and monopoly capital. But it is because of this very weakness that the bourgeoisies of the South are unable to modify the international order for their benefit. The lack of strength to bring about the NIEO program leads me to think that what is more likely to develop in the next decade is a series of revolts of the populist type, such as those that took place in Iran, Nicaragua, and Ethiopia.

Q. *In terms of the international monetary system do you see in the near future any drastic change, a movement away from the dollar? How might this affect the United States?*

A. An international monetary system has never existed except as a feature accompanying the hegemony of one center over the global system. For instance, during the nineteenth century the British hegemony over the global system was accompanied by an international monetary system, the gold standard, which was *de facto* the sterling standard. Similarly, from 1944 to 1971, when the United States was the hegemonic power, the inter-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

national monetary system was based on the Bretton Woods agreement, the IMF, and the dollar. Now, if we look at B phases which are times of acute competition among the imperialist centers and not of any one particular hegemony, we find that these are periods of chaos. The rules of a coordinated international monetary system do not govern in such periods. We are now entering a B phase. 1971 was the year when the convertibility of the dollar into gold was suspended. That was the end of the monetary system that had ruled the world under U.S. hegemony.

Since we are entering a period of acute competition among the imperialist centers, the international monetary system will not be unified and orderly. Hence all the blah-blah on the reform of the IMF, SDRs, etc., should be understood as constituting tactical agreements, short-term compromises in a period of acute competition.

Q. *How would you characterize the position of the superpowers in the present crisis?*

A. This is indeed a fundamental question. I would summarize my analysis in the following way. During the early decades after the Second World War, we had what I would call a double hegemonic structure, with one of the two superpowers dominating the capitalist system and the other the so-called socialist system of states. This double hegemony was not only military, but also economic in the sense that Europe and Japan were dependent on U.S. technology and aid—remember the Marshall Plan. This double hegemony was also very strong in the field of ideology and politics. The Soviet Union appeared as *the* socialist country *par excellence,* and the struggle between capitalism and socialism was reduced to the conflict between the capitalist camp and the socialist camp. This was the period of Stalinism and hence a period in which all the political forces of the world had to line up with one of the two camps. There was no other choice, no neutrality possible. I have a feeling that this double hegemony has ended and that this change is associated with a decline of both superpowers.

The decline of the United States can be seen in (1) the increasing ability of Western Europe and Japan to compete

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

economically with the United States, and (2) the minimal autonomy acquired by the bourgeoisies of the South in the wake of the defeat of the United States in Indochina. The decline in the Soviet Union's hegemonic position is equally clear, especially in view of the Sino-Soviet split and developments in Eastern Europe, particularly what is going on at present in Poland.

This double decline is creating a very dangerous situation in the short run, opening the possibility of a global war. As I see it, there was no real danger of war during the Cold War years. The threat of war was used by each superpower to repress opposition within its camp, but in fact the Yalta boundaries were very clear and the war danger was not real. On the other hand, the danger of war increases when the major powers are on the decline, because each of them is afraid that the other will exploit its decline to gain some advantage. Thus, the United States might feel menaced by the Soviets in such places as Ethiopia, Angola, Afghanistan, and Central America, while the Soviets might consider themselves menaced by developments in Poland or by a United States-China alliance.

There are now no longer clear-cut boundaries, since there are many countries that have achieved a certain degree of autonomy and can operate more independently than in the past. What happened in Iran is typical, insofar as that country has escaped control by forces that in earlier days would have brought the country into one or the other camp. Developments of this kind generate uncertainty and new dangers. Each superpower is then faced with the question of limits: What changes would the other superpower consider unacceptable in its own decline? At present, it seems to me, the limit of unacceptability for the West would be the loss of control of major oil areas, and for the Soviet Union the loss of East Germany. This observation is only an assumption based on the way things look now.

But, and I stress this point, apart from the pressing danger of war in the short run, I see the double decline of the two superpowers as absolutely positive for socialist forces in the long run. As the sway of the two superpowers weakens, more room is created for independent action by the people and popular classes on all sides of the boundary: in the West, East, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

South. Currently there is no autonomous front facing the two declining superpowers. One may to a certain extent consider the nonaligned movement as such a front. But these countries are economically, politically, and militarily weak. Moreover, most of them are faced with an economic crisis and growing social conflicts and social unrest. This front tends to be merely vocal, accompanied by *de facto* alignment with the multinationals in the economic field and from time to time political and military alignment with the Soviet Union.

This double alignment is certainly *not* nonalignment. But to the extent that this front could be reinforced, it would take the form of a national, popular response to the crisis in the South. Any such reinforcement would enlarge the space for maneuver and autonomy. Behind the governments of these states are the classes and the peoples who could take advantage of a higher level of autonomy. Without going too far into the prospects for the future, the double decline of the superpowers could probably lead to a series of explosions and a further weakening of both systems. In this respect, the loosening of ties with the capitalist system in some parts of the South, including Iran, is not the result of pure chance. Similarly, the developments in Eastern Europe, and especially in Poland, testify to a growing weakness of the Soviet system.

How the two superpowers on the decline will react to more such revolts that escape from their control is hard to say. But I think, and will conclude at this point, that this double decline is very positive. It signifies the end of a whole historical period of perhaps 50 years during which things were blocked, and the opening of a new period in which the struggle between socialism and capitalism, however complicated it may become, will not continue to be reduced to the struggle between groups of states.

Have you joined the Associates?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS

CAPITALISM WITH THE GLOVES OFF

By Doug Dowd

Friendly Fascism: The New Face of Power in America, by Bertram Gross. New York: M. Evans and Company, Inc., 1980. 420 pp., notes, index, $15.00.

You and I shudder in the night and grit our teeth at the very thought of (Oi!) President Reagan and his henchmen swimming at the top of the cesspool the United States ever more becomes, and of their doing so for years—years that will seem like centuries. And then we must confront the fact that untold millions of our fellow citizens, largely irrespective of class, color, creed, gender, or present condition of servitude, are blissed out over the very same prospect; are beguiled by dreams of a Second Coming of rugged free enterprise and its each-for-himself and the market-for-all economics; are eager to strut to its hell-for-leather, chest-pounding foreign policy: God on our side where He belongs, once more.

Bertram Gross has been putting this book together for many years, and had completed it well before the Reagan election. It is an almost desperately pertinent study, as solid as it is comprehensive; and it helps us to see the triumph of the Reagan gang as part of a process that has been taking shape for a very long time. Reagan's boyish, all-American style might explain how he became the figurehead of this visible shift to the right—toward,

The author teaches economics at California State University, San Jose.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that is, increased social viciousness and mindlessness, toward the sanctification of greed and of patriotic bombast, toward systematic reaction and camouflaged authoritarianism. In our history, none of these has been missing; that they now move swiftly to an ever tighter and more dangerous combination, and that the U.S. public in significant part finds it soul-stirring, has very little indeed to do with Reagan himself; it is the latest outcome of how the U.S. social system has moved through time, of its recent decades of monopoly capitalism in ascendance and decline, most especially of the dog days of the past several years.

All this raises at least two questions: What accounts for the current range of economic, political, and social afflictions of the contemporary United States? And, given those afflictions, why do so many of our people see this troupe of Meeseketeers as a portent of change for the better, instead of pelting them with rotten eggs and hooting them off the stage?

A reading of *Friendly Fascism* adds urgency to those questions, at the same time that it helps us to move toward usable answers. But to begin with, it is advisable to defuse the likely (and unwarranted) indignation of those readers for whom not even capitalism, let alone fascism, could conceivably be seen as "friendly."

The choice of that adjective was perhaps unfortunate, except as an eye-catcher. Gross knows well and shows fully that fascism has no room in it for humane institutions; but he needs to distinguish what is now emerging in the United States from the fascism of other times and places: from the classic fascism of Italy, Germany, Japan (and many other countries) between the two world wars; or, since the Second World War, from that of Chile, Greece, South Korea, and the like. In his first chapter, Gross provides a brief but sufficient discussion of classic fascism, which shows the basis and the need for seeing potential U.S. fascism, if not as "friendly," as likely to be a very different kind of beast.

Fascism has always been a response to socio-economic crisis in capitalist society. Whether or not it has taken on the forms it did in, say, Nazi Germany has depended upon the needs and the possibilities facing the capitalist class in the midst of crisis. In Germany, as with the other classic fascist developments, strong revolutionary forces existed: whatever else it was and had to be, Nazism was counter-revolutionary. Why there were such revolutionary forces in Germany points to critical aspects of its history;

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that there were, points to critical needs facing German capitalism if it was to survive—and survive it did in the period that stretches from 1930 down to the present, grotesquely, insanely, destructively; survive it did, always with a little help from its friends.

The needs of German capitalism in crisis cut through the entire range of social existence, and its fascism both could be and had to be one of fanatic totalitarianism, the glorification of the state, the nation, the race, of war, with associated genocidal repression and all those ways and means that make one's gorge rise when thinking of Hitler's Germany.

If any of these "German" developments were to accompany fascism in the United States, they would do so, it may be argued (and is, by Gross), only in minor degree—except that fascism has been, and in its nature must be, the most warlike of all social forms. Considering the perennial warlike stance of non-fascist America, that is no small exception. Nor should we believe that none of these Nazi-like institutions could take hold in the United States because of our superior moral core. Germany, after all, was seen as something like the apogee of Western civilization in the late 1920s (in the arts, in science and learning, in technology, and in its model constitution); nor, to put no finer point on it, has the United States eschewed, say, genocidal tactics within its borders or outside them.

Still, so long as there is an at best weak revolutionary threat in the United States, and the country is unlikely to require (or be able to create) a full-scale counter-revolutionary process, we may well produce a fascist society as the crisis deepens, but one without the need for "a charismatic dictator, one-party rule, glorification of the state, dissolution of legislatures, termination of multiparty elections, ultra-nationalism, or attacks on rationality." (p. 169) But, if and "when genuine neofascism emerges it may be associated with a relaxation of crude terror and the maturation of more sophisticated, effective, and ruthless controls." (p. 171) Not exactly a rose garden, and all the more insidious and dangerous because it will not seem so different from stagflating monopoly capitalism, especially if, as is likely, the process from here to there is a gradual one. By comparison with the Germans, the Japanese, and the Italians (among others) as they moved into fascism, ours is a country with a considerable layer of economic fat (also part of the reason for our lack of revolutionary forces). We are not likely to be ranted and raved at as we move further down the primrose path; Ronnie will do it with jokes and smiles, all the way.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Which takes us back to our two questions, beginning with why the people of this country are so easily manipulated or, to put it bluntly, such political morons.

It is not only the United States that fits Marx's epigram to the effect that the ruling ideas in any society are the ideas of its ruling class, nor just the United States that Antonio Gramsci had in mind when he saw the power of "bourgeois ideological hegemony" to gain the "uncoerced acceptance" of capitalist rule. But would it not be difficult to find a society whose population has so fully accepted capitalist values, ways, and means, and allowed them so thoroughly to infuse all its institutions, whether economic, or educational, or political, or aesthetic, or religious, or . . .? In different words, the United States has been the most successful of capitalist societies in "teaching" its people *not* to think analytically, let alone historically, about their social existence (or much else): as Veblen once put it, we have "a trained incapacity" for social understanding. Over time that "training" has spread and deepened, has become a leukemia to our mental (and emotional) processes, has produced a degree of social inanity that brings us now to the verge of species suicide. (In none of this do I mean to suggest that there is some other society, capitalist or not, whose residents are, or have been trained to be, socially astute. But it seems clear that in this contest, the United States is the one to beat.)

A full analysis of U.S. capitalist development is required to understand why this has been achievable and achieved here. Part of the answer is that U.S. capitalism has been able to deliver the goods to larger numbers of its population in greater quantities and sooner than anywhere else; and part of the answer has been that its population has been so docile, so eager to become what its ruling class needed: at one time hard workers and, later, hard consumers. (What next?) And seen from another angle, the relative absence of class consciousness thereby suggested was much aided and abetted by the heterogeneous racial and religious mix of our population and the successes of racism in exploiting the situation. Still, what finally tipped the scales was that cornucopia of blessings that have made U.S. history what it is, blessings of natural and human resources, of timing and of location, of, in short, whatever was necessary or useful for easy and swift capitalist development. Name it, and it came to the United States, almost as though from on high. (Maybe God *was* on our side?)

That at every moment of our history some substantial per-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

centage of the population was denied a seat at the groaning table, far from promoting class consciousness, was effectively interpreted and used to strengthen the ideology of self-help, and to locate the causes in the shortcomings of those on the outside, not in the key operating rules of the system. (*System*: as a college teacher, one of my main difficulties is to get students to see that there *is* a system of society, not just a collection of getters and spenders.)

There have been, of course, episodes of anger and protest—e.g., before the First World War, during the Great Depression, and in the 1960s. But each of these petered out (or was crushed, as in the early 1920s and the McCarthy period), to be followed by, respectively, the "ages" of Jazz, Uncle Ike, and Now, in each case scaling new heights of social know-nothingism. Except for a minority, and only once in a while, when things have gone bad in society, it has been seen as the fault of our historic bogeymen: gummint and furriners. In one of his customarily perceptive essays for *The Nation,* Alan Wolfe sees "a particularly American form of reaction, a soft-core counter-revolution that harms the spirit as much as violence and state-directed terrorism maim the body." And he goes on to argue that when our "national malaise" is explained to us "you may be sure that it will blame some sinister outside force for domestic ills." (January 31, 1981)

Meanwhile, there have been problems in our political economy that have been emerging and connecting with each other now for many years, almost all of them analyzed in these pages, one by one and in relation to each other, and well before even being noticed in the straight world: stagflation, financial precariousness, creaking empire, and so on. But in the capitalist world, the word "problem" is itself problematic: it is a world of class, business, social, and national conflicts; and what is a problem for one is more often than not an achievement for another: e.g., inflation, which tends to make the powerful more so, and the weak more so. But Gross is not concerned with "problems," he is concerned with the connection between a chronic crisis for the system and its only visible option for dealing with it: by transition to another system: neofascism, friendly fascism, or, as Harold Laski put it in the 1930s for what then existed, "capitalism with the gloves off."

The "gloves" are the forms of political democracy (unionism, social welfare policies, etc.) that have had the effect of blunting the jagged edges of the capitalist process. A buoyant capital accumulation process in the stages of modern industrialization both

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

allows and requires such amelioration: it keeps the social peace and it feeds economic growth. But in times of systemic crisis (which almost always includes a sagging rate of accumulation), social amelioration becomes transformed from necessity to luxury, and it must be sliced back to the bone if accumulation is to be saved: back to the harsh procedures of nineteenth-century capitalism, in the name of "supply-side economics." But how do you get a whole population to accept such cutbacks (not just for "the poor" but for the entire working class, broadly defined), especially when the argument in favor is couched in the abstruse terms of an utterly implausible economics? By friendly fascism, if at all, that's how. By extending the processes of mind management that are already so thoroughly embedded in all aspects of our lives, and by repressing those who ask for trouble.

Gross is expert in treating the complex processes by and because of which U.S. capitalism has been groping its way through the thickets of relative decline. He is good in many ways, and clear, but he is best at establishing the paths of continuity between the past, the present, and what lies ahead.

It is difficult to think of any important social process or structure that has escaped his analysis. All of what are usually called economic problems (of stagflation, of monopolistic power, of foreign trade and competition, and so on) are here; as are the global and national politics that move both above and below the surface; as are the various techniques of persuasion and manipulation, whether mental or physical, whether soothing or terroristic. Nor does he neglect the ways of those who believe they have found a personal means of getting out from under this system, through drugs, or cults, or whatever. It is thus a very large book, crammed with arguments and facts, but coherently. It is unpleasant reading, unrelieved by a light touch. Gross is not seeking to amuse.

But it is not a book without hope, despite the author's insistence that it can happen here, indeed that we are in some real sense already halfway there. Gross does not believe (nor do I) that the various components of an American fascism cannot be turned back, despite how much they already ooze over our social landscape. His Chapter 18 is entitled "It Hasn't Happened Yet." But we all know that a change toward life in this country will not happen of itself. Even if, as is probable, the hopes promoted by Reagan are deflated soon and firmly, it does not follow that a better fate awaits: indeed, the accompanying bitterness could enhance the dangers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Better fates, as we all know, must be created by those who would have them. And Gross spends the last fifty pages of his fine book making specific suggestions as to the components of a plausible program of what might be worked at right now that could lay the foundations for the social reconstruction of the United States from the bottom up. In a generally valuable book, those suggestions may finally be among its most valuable contributions, if also difficult to bring to fruition. But whatever the difficulties, to seek to build democratic institutions in all parts of our lives can scarcely be harder on us than to shudder through the night.

CONTEMPORARY MARXISM No. 2

The European Workers' Movement

GUEST EDITOR: Immanuel Wallerstein

How does a militant workers' movement fight for socialism in advanced capitalist countries?

Today, there are no successful models, which is one reason that contemporary political debates are so intense. Internationally known Marxists—**Amin, Balibar, Claudín, Frank, Morosini, Paramio, Wallerstein**—engage in this debate in "The European Workers' Movement." Their stance is sober, not rosy-eyed. They analyze the issues of strategy, class alliances, and party building and address the question: Is Eurocommunism a viable road to socialism? The issues are complex and controversial; CONTEMPORARY MARXISM, No. 2 offers frank and divergent views.

Synthesis Publications, Dept. , P.O. Box 40099, San Francisco, CA 94140. $5.00

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

KURDISTAN: THE UNKNOWN STRUGGLE

By Richard Morrock

People Without a Country: The Kurds and Kurdistan, edited by Gérard Chaliand. London: Zed Books, 1980; Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill, 1980. $19.95; paper $7.95.

There are some 15 million Kurds in the Middle East, scattered over an area stretching from Istanbul to Afghanistan. Kurdistan, their homeland, is divided up among Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, with small portions extending into Syria. Outside Kurdistan proper, there are Kurdish communities in eastern Iran, Damascus, Beirut, the Soviet Union, and the cities of western Turkey. Kurds form 16 percent of Iran's population, 28 percent of Iraq's, 24 percent of Turkey's, and 11 percent of Syria's.

The Kurds, who are related to the Persians, are an ancient people who were familiar even to the classical Greek historians. Converted to Islam by their Arab neighbors, the Kurds retained their independence until the sixteenth century, although they were fragmented among many independent principalities. Eventually, these small states were absorbed by the Ottoman Empire after fierce resistance. The present division of Kurdistan was arranged after 1922, when the Ottoman Empire fell and its southern provinces were taken over by Britain and France.

Gérard Chaliand's book, most of whose contributors are Kurdish intellectuals, is a concise, readable, and fascinating introduction to recent Kurdish history. As Chaliand points out in his introductory chapter, the Kurds are the largest single national

Richard Morrock, a playwright whose plays have been produced at La Mama (New York City), is a frequent contributor to MONTHLY REVIEW.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

community in the world which has not been granted any degree of self-determination. The chapters on the situations in Turkish, Iranian, Iraqi, and Syrian Kurdistan present a stark and graphic illustration of what it means, in human terms, for a nation to be deprived of its right to exist.

In Iraqi Kurdistan, for example, the Baghdad government has launched no fewer than five wars against the Kurds since 1960. (pp. 237-238) Even today, three rival liberation movements are continuing the guerrilla struggle. The Iraqi economy is heavily dependent on oil, which comes from fields near Kirkuk in Kurdistan. Yet Kurdistan receives only about 10 percent of the country's development funds. "Out of 150 industrial projects, only 4 were planned for Kurdistan." (pp. 174-175) The military and civil service discriminate against Kurds; schools and colleges in Kurdish areas are being transformed into vehicles of Arabization. True, Iraqi Kurdistan has been granted a form of autonomy by the Ba'ath regime, but the autonomous region includes only half of the territory populated by Kurds. In addition, the autonomous region's government is appointed by the central authorities and does not represent the people.

Worst of all are the deportations and massacres. The Iraqi army behaves like any counter-revolutionary force, committing wholesale atrocities against defenseless villagers. The anti-Kurdish policy has included the mass expulsion from Iraq of 40,000 Iranian Kurdish immigrants; the expulsion from Kirkuk of four hundred Kurdish families employed in the oil fields; the deportation to southern (Arab-populated) Iraq of 200,000 Kurds; and the construction of new settlements for Arab families in Kurdish areas, both inside and outside the so-called autonomous region.

The policy of the Syrian Ba'athists in the Jezireh district, a narrow salient jutting in between Turkey and Iraq, has been similar. The Syrians have refused to recognize the Kurds as a national minority. The Kurds, according to one Ba'athist ideologue, "do not constitute a nation," and "their only characteristics are those shaped by force, destructive power, and violence. . . ." (p. 216) In effect, Ba'athist attitudes toward the Kurds mirror Western colonial attitudes toward the Arabs.

Iranian Kurdistan was economically neglected under the Shah, and the army and secret police had even more power in the Kurdish provinces than elsewhere in the country. For example: "Each Kurdish peasant traveling from one village to another must inform the mayors of both villages, who, in turn, are obliged to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inform the security police." (p. 127) Publications in Kurdish were forbidden, and the government even discouraged the wearing of traditional dress.

Iranian Kurdistan was one of the strongest centers of opposition to the Shah's tyranny during the 1978-1979 revolution. Ironically, the overthrow of the royalist regime and the establishment of Ayatollah Khomeini's theocratic rule has proved to be of no benefit to the Kurds. Khomeini has continued the short-sighted policies of the Shah toward Iran's non-Persian minorities, who together form about half of the population. The Kurds have been particularly resistant to Khomeini because most of them are Sunni Moslems, whereas the Persians are Shi'ites. Today, former royalists in the army and secret police proclaim their dubious loyalty to the new Islamic order, while Kurdish guerrillas, fighting for the same things they fought for under the Shah, are denounced as counter-revolutionaries and agents of imperialism by both Khomeini and his pro-Moscow Communist allies.

The largest Kurdish community is found in Turkey, where repression has been most severe—beginning with the Ottomans and continuing through the Kemalist period up to today. In the past, Kurdish political activity was punishable by death. In the towns, Kurds were fined for even speaking a single word in their native language. The economic neglect of Turkish Kurdistan is a matter of official policy, and has forced hundreds of thousands of Turkish Kurds to migrate to the cities, where they constitute a large part of the unskilled working class.

Turkish nationalists deny the existence of the Kurdish nation, defining them as "mountain Turks," in disregard of cultural and historical realities. In 1960 Turkish military dictator General Gursel stated: "If the mountain Turks do not keep quiet, the Army will not hesitate to bomb their towns and villages into the ground. There will be such a bloodbath that they and their country will be washed away." (p. 75) This was no bluff. During the 1960s and 1970s, Turkish army units conducted brutal searches of Kurdish villages in which many peasants were tortured and killed. This was a preventive measure, aimed at stopping any insurrection before it started.

Two factors are likely to increase the significance of Kurdish nationalism in the near future. First, there is the war between Iraq and Iran, in which the governments in Baghdad and Teheran are each aiding Kurdish insurrectionists in the other's territory. Second, there is the crisis in Turkey, which showed signs of de-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

generating into full-scale civil war before the violence was interrupted—temporarily, one strongly suspects—by the recent military takeover. The Turkish Kurds, long supporters of the conservative Justice Party, had been switching to the radical left and to Kurdish nationalist movements in recent years. This promoted a violent reaction by the fascist right—the Nationalist Action Party and its paramilitary force, the Grey Wolves—which correctly understood that the radicalization of Turkish Kurdistan would shift the political center of gravity of the whole country strongly to the left. Of course the anti-Kurdish pogroms organized by the fascists have only served to increase the pace of the Kurdish political awakening.

We can expect to hear a great deal more about Kurdistan in the near future, and Chaliand's well written and carefully researched volume provides us with an excellent background.

new from **Monthly Review Press**

AND THE POOR GET CHILDREN

Radical Perspectives on Population Dynamics

KAREN L. MICHAELSON, editor

The need to put population processes into a social, economic, and political context has redirected the attention of population planners from contraception and family planning to increasing per capita income and standards of living. Despite this widening focus, however, the context of analysis and policy remains a national one, and the instruments those of improved technology and wider education. Not addressed is the relationship between nations, especially between the developed and underdeveloped ones, which shape the economic and political context in which incomes rise or do not rise. Nor are the class relationships, which determine whose incomes will rise and whose will not, seriously considered.

The contributors to this volume take up these issues, both theoretically and in case studies. Collectively they argue that only a radical restructuring of world capitalist production will allow individuals control over the processes that affect their lives.

CL552X $16.00/£8 • 65

add $1.00 when ordering by mail

62 West 14th St., New York, N.Y. 10011 / 47 Red Lion St., London WC1R 4PF

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER

I

I liked Jonathan A. Leonard's thoughtful and unflinching examination of the horrifying consequences of a nuclear war and the probability of one's occurring ("Danger: Nuclear War," MONTHLY REVIEW, February 1981). More needs to be known about these consequences, and such knowledge needs to be broadly and deeply disseminated until it is etched in the awareness of all people, particularly those living in countries possessing nuclear weapons. We should not leave the knowledge of the consequences of such a horrifying event to the experts. Nor should we yield to the few the power to decide upon the use of these weapons. If we claim to have learned anything during the past twenty years, we should have learned that "You can't trust the experts!" They lie, they distort, they ignore, and they omit; and in doing so, they inflict great evil on humanity. With the exception of a few (like the members of Physicians for Social Responsibility) either they are quiet or they sing the ideological tunes of their employers, private corporations, governments, and the institutions they control. The times cry out for a democratization both of knowledge and decision-making power, especially in regard to waging a nuclear war—quite possibly uncontrollable and of immeasurable destructive magnitude.

Particularly distressing is the alacrity of the Reagan administration in assuming the posture of leading defender of capitalist imperialism. Waving the neutron bomb and beating the war drums, these officials have muddled their first steps into foreign policy in supporting unpopular governments in El Salvador and elsewhere. They have the militaristic outlook of the crackpot realists

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

C. Wright Mills warned us about some time ago. They are leading us into a Cold War that could result in ethnocide. In what is doomed to be a futile attempt to restore American capitalism and American imperialism to the position it held thirty years ago, the Reagan administration is deflecting attention away from the deepening economic crisis affecting this country.

As for the danger of a nuclear war occurring, I think we must, unfortunately, regard it as a "clear and present" one, at least until Reagan's foreign-policy advisers cease attempting to provoke Soviet leaders and start attempting to establish a rapprochement with Russia extending at least for the length of the current administration. Reagan's ignorance is vast. The possibility of his bungling his way into a nuclear confrontation with Russia is real. The temptation for him to seek such a confrontation will increase as economic distress and social conflict increase in the United States. We must let Reagan, Haig, and the others running this country know, "No war, little or big!" and hope the Russian people express the same message to their leaders.

We need more voices like that of Jonathan Leonard, reminiscent of the now stilled one of Bertrand Russell, and we need to have them heard. The same bomb hangs over all of us; it can kill us all.

Michael Quirk
Highland Park, N.J.

II

MONTHLY REVIEW is to be congratulated for running the article "Danger: Nuclear War," by Jonathan A. Leonard, in the February 1981 issue. This is by far the most urgent aspect of the nuclear question, way beyond the problem of pollution by nuclear-power generation. And it has been given too little attention by the anti-nuclear movement as well as by the U.S. left. It is reassuring that a group of establishment physicians has become aware of the danger and has launched a campaign to persuade our government to step back from its present aggressive posture in regard to the possible use of nuclear weapons. This effort deserves our full support.

In a key paragraph, Leonard lists those aspects of the problem for which he admits primary U.S. responsibility:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nor is there any compelling reason to believe that Russia has foisted the nuclear-arms race upon us. On the contrary, America invented the atom bomb, produced the first hydrogen bomb, developed the first strategic bombers, deployed the first armed ICBM's, launched the first nuclear submarines, deployed the first submarine-based missiles, and invented the first MIRV's (multiple individually targeted re-entry vehicles), which permit one missile to deliver many bombs. More recently, we have been deferring ratification of the SALT II treaty, pressing the Europeans to accept missiles able to strike the Soviet Union, and developing MX and cruise-missile systems that will advance the nuclear-arms race another notch. As George Kistiakowsky said last February, referring to that race, "Let's not for a moment believe that we are angels, that we are for peace and the other side is bloodthirsty. The thing is pretty even." So there is every reason for thinking the United States could exert a powerful influence to contain or cut back the arms race if it chose.

The world is living under a balance of nuclear terror. Both the United States and the Soviet Union have the capacity to wipe out each other and the rest of the world, and it is easy to hold each equally responsible and to cuss them both out. This is in effect what Leonard does. To break the deadlock, he urges the United States to take the first step: "Offering to negotiate reduction of a nuclear stockpile easily capable of crushing the Russians several times over—even if they strike first—is a bit like a small boy with a thousand snowballs offering to throw away ten. It is hard to see how this could do much harm."

This recognizes *some* U.S. responsibility, and is good as far as it goes. "The thing is pretty even," according to Kistiakowsky. But Leonard omitted from his list of U.S. responsibilities the most important element of all: America not only invented the atom bomb, it *used* it, twice. Moreover, it is the only nation to have used it; it has never pledged not to use it again; it has based much of its international policy since 1945 on the nuclear deterrent; and it is now making every effort to achieve a situation in which it could use it some more without serious risk of reprisal.

The real state of affairs is dazzlingly clear. If there is nuclear terror in the world today, the United States created it. And the United States would like nothing better than to be able to upset the balance by shaking off the Soviet Union via the route of outspending it on new nuclear techniques. There are compelling reasons to believe the United States "has foisted the nuclear-arms race" on the Soviet Union and the rest of the world. And there

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is reason to suppose that, having used the weapon once, there would be little hesitation to use it again if circumstances demanded and there were no danger of retaliation. Given the high tension of the Cold War of the 1950s, one may speculate that the United States might have used it against the Soviet Union, had that nation not already achieved rough parity by the early years of that decade. If then the bomb has not been utilized since 1945 primarily because parity had been achieved, are we not justified in giving thanks that the Soviet Union had achieved that parity? And far from considering it a "betrayal" of U.S. interests, should we and all humanity not give heartfelt thanks to any "traitor" who might have helped the Soviet Union to develop parity with the United States by revealing significant nuclear "secrets"? (It is highly unlikely, of course, that the Soviet Union achieved its nuclear parity via this route.)

A careful examination of the nuclear arms race, then, will show the overwhelming responsibility of the United States. Seen in this light every move by the Soviet Union can be explained as a defensive ploy for survival, as a reaction to actions already taken by the United States which could only be interpreted as hostile and threatening.

Leonard and the doctors have quite properly alerted us to the imminent danger of nuclear war. But they have not adequately interpreted that danger, nor revealed its real origin. As a consequence, they have failed to show us where the struggle against that danger must be directed. A balance of terror, yes; but more: a mortal threat poised over any nation or people that has escaped or that threatens to escape from the world system of capitalism.

The ultimate content of the fascism that seized hold of much of Europe between the two world wars was a last-ditch effort to preserve capitalism and its particular pattern of privileges. An important part of that movement was the German effort to destroy the Soviet Union, perceived as the spearhead of the anticapitalist movement. The Germans failed. But the very cataclysm that sent them to defeat left the United States as the unquestioned champion of capitalism, and the Soviet Union in a strengthened position vis-à-vis capitalism as a whole. This new global confrontation explains both the intensity of the Cold War, and the virulence of the nuclear threat facing the Soviet Union.

A balance of terror, yes. But one in which the United States has played the role of aggressor and the Soviet Union a defensive role. The club of world reaction, once wielded by the Nazis, is now swung desperately and crazily by our own government. For

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

us who understand this historical development, it is not a question of gently persuading both the United States and the Soviet Union to lay down their arms ("a plague on both your houses"), but rather of disarming unilaterally the United States. Only with the United States disarmed is there any possibility of survival for the world's people, of their continuing their march toward a better life.

This disarming of the United States is a truly awesome task. It will require no less than the replacement of the capitalist system in its heartland, and therefore worldwide. We have the major responsibility for this task, a responsibility not just, nor primarily, to the people of this country, but to all the world. And we haven't even started. Our first step must be to recognize the source of the danger: U.S. imperialism. The next is to conceive of the role of the United States left: no less than to bring the mad monster under the control of the whole people. And this can be accomplished only by the complete dismantling of its present political, military, and economic might.

The Soviet Union has plenty of shortcomings to answer for to its own peoples and to those on its borders. But it is not responsible either for the problem of world survival posed by the nuclear danger, nor for the widespread unwillingness of the people of the world to remain any longer under capitalist domination, a turbulence that may prove to be the pretext for further nuclear aggressions by the United States.

Leonard and the doctors have taken a useful step in pointing to where our major responsibility lies. But they have not pinpointed the precise nature of the work that lies ahead of us. Our task is not to bring the Soviet Union to justice for its failures, but to save humanity from destruction at the hands of *our* government. At the moment, who can say that we will even recognize the responsibility, much less carry it out in time?

Name Withheld

The Editors Comment

We agree with Michael Quirk on the general principle of not trusting the experts. Like all general principles, however, it must be applied with appropriate discrimination. There are experts and experts, and in the case of the danger of nuclear war it happens to be the most knowledgeable experts who are most alarmed and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

best qualified to assess the real magnitude of the danger. This emerges clearly from Jonathan Leonard's article, and it is heavily underlined by the leading article in the April 1981 issue of *Scientific American* ("Catastrophic Releases of Radioactivity," by Steven A. Fetter and Kosta Tsipis). In this context the ones not to be trusted are not the real experts, who need to be encouraged to speak out, but the political leaders and the bureaucrats at the Pentagon and the State Department who do not hesitate to jeopardize the future of humanity to protect their narrow class and personal interests.

With respect to the communication from our other correspondent—whose request for anonymity is entirely justified under present circumstances but has nothing to do with the subject under discussion—we are in complete agreement on the responsibilities of the United States. But we believe that from a tactical point of view his emphasis on unilateral U.S. disarmament is misguided. On this we hold the same view as E. P. Thompson, who wrote in the (Manchester) *Guardian* of March 1:

> I think it is of great importance, at this moment of growth in the Western European movement, for us to keep steadily in view the strategy (however difficult) of bringing pressure upon *both* sides to disarm. I shall oppose Cruise and Trident whether or not the [Soviet] SS-20 is dismantled: these are evil and they bring us into greater danger. But our movement cannot succeed unless we can break, somehow, across that divide, and call forth reciprocal responses from the East.
>
> To allow the Western peace movement to drift into collusion with the strategy of the [Soviet-supported] World Peace Council—that is, in effect, to become a movement opposing NATO militarism *only*—is a recipe for our own containment and ultimate defeat.

One semester teaching position *(pending final funding approval)* in the area of women and the Caribbean or Latin America. Joint appointment in Sociology, Latin American and Caribbean Area Studies, and Women's Studies, Spring semester, 1982. Candidates with scholarly or community organizing experience are invited to apply. Position emphasizes political economy or social science orientation.

Salary $8,000 to $11,000 depending on qualifications.

Please send resumé and samples of writing to Joan Smith, Director of Women's Studies or Mark Selden, Department of Sociology, SUNY-Binghamton, N.Y. 13901. SUNY-Binghamton is an affirmative action equal opportunity employer.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN THESE TIMES *TOURS*

IN THESE TIMES offers you an unusual travel opportunity this summer. Our tour program for the summer of 1981 focuses on Europe. We have arranged four exciting and unique ways to experience this region. **ENGLAND:** ***Feudalism, Capitalism and Socialism*** and **ITALY:** ***Classical and Contemporary*** are two tours that will focus on the political economy of these nations. **YUGOSLAVIA:** ***The Adriatic Land of Contrasts*** and **THE CAPITALS OF EASTERN EUROPE** are two opportunities to see and learn more about Eastern Europe, an area about which Westerners know little.

IN THESE TIMES TOURS offer vacation opportunities with interesting political experiences. They include a tour leader experienced in the area you will be visiting as well as a travel escort to assure you a pleasant and worry-free trip—a combination that guarantees a memorable experience for you this summer!

- **ENGLAND:** ***Feudalism, Capitalism and Socialism***
  July 28-Aug. 8, 1981 / 14 days / $1,850
- **THE CAPITALS OF EASTERN EUROPE**
  Aug. 7-24, 1981 / 18 days / $2,222
- **ITALY:** ***Classical and Contemporary***
  Aug. 14-28, 1981 / 15 days / $2,195
- **YUGOSLAVIA:** ***The Adriatic Land of Contrasts***
  Aug. 27-Sept. 5, 1981 / 10 days / $1,661

Space is limited so act now—call or write **IN THESE TIMES TOURS** 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave. Chicago, IL 60622 312-489-4444 (collect).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"The best chance we have to prevent U.S. intervention in El Salvador is early warning information, full, fast, accurate. The best chance we have for such information is NACLA's Report on the Americas." Ramsey Clark

EL SALVADOR
How long before the bodybags?

You can read the body counts in the *New York Times*, listen to General Haig or trust the "White Papers." Or you can find out what's **really** happening in El Salvador. Published by NACLA, a widely-respected independent research organization, this two-part issue on El Salvador is essential reading for anyone concerned about escalating U.S. involvement in another foreign war.

Part I: Why Revolution? examines 50 years of military dictatorship in El Salvador and traces the development of opposition forces. Includes a complete listing of foreign investments and a history of U.S. military assistance.

Part II: A Revolution Brews looks at the polarization of political forces in El Salvador since the October 1979 coup and explores the Vietnam analogy as applied to U.S. policy.

Yes, *I want to know more about El Salvador*. Please send me:

☐ Part I ☐ Part II ☐ More information on NACLA's publications.
Enclosed is $_____. ($2.50 per issue, plus $.75 postage.)

☐ I want to know what's **really** happening in **all** of Latin America in these critical times. I enclose $13 for a one-year subscription to **NACLA Report on the Americas.**

Name _____

Address _____

_____ **Zip** _____

(Check in US$ must accompany order.) Please remit to: **3**

NACLA (North American Congress on Latin America)
151 West 19th St., 9th Floor
New York, NY 10011

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

build a socialist library at half-price

by supporting

Monthly Review Foundation Associates

Membership entitles you to:

- *A discount of 50% off the list price of any MR Press book.* A $16.00 book for $8.00, or a $5.95 paperback for half price, represents a considerable saving—enough to enable you to buy twice as many books.
- A one-year subscription to MONTHLY REVIEW (if you are already a subscriber we renew your sub automatically).
- A free copy of one of the following new MR Press titles: *Conflict and Intervention in the Horn of Africa* by Bereket Habte Selassie (list price: $15.00); *Myths of Male Dominance: Collected Articles on Women Cross-Culturally* by Eleanor Burke Leacock (list price $17.50); *Reflections on the World Economic Crisis* by Andre Gunder Frank (list price $13.50; not available as a choice for Associates in the British Commonwealth or United Kingdom).

Monthly Review Foundation Associates 62 West 14th Street, N.Y. 10011

I enclose $..... Please enroll me as an MR Foundation Associate.
Please send me the free book of my choice from the above list:

.....

☐ I am already a subscriber.
Check category below

☐ $ 35 - $49; £20 • 50 - £27 • 50	Supporting Associate
☐ $ 50 - $99; £28 • 50 - £56	Sustaining Associate
☐ $100 and over; £57 and over	Foundation Associate

That portion of your contribution in excess of $50.00 is deductible in calculating your income tax.

Name .....

Street .....

City ..... State ..... Zip .....

Please make check payable to Monthly Review Foundation
Those who wish to pay in sterling should remit to
Monthly Review, 47 Red Lion Street, London WC1R 4PF, England
(Giro Account No. 557 6350)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

new from **Monthly Review Press**

SANDINO

GREGORIO SELSER

Translated by Cedric Belfrage

A dramatic account of a struggle in Nicaraguan history which has never received the attention in the United States which it so richly merits. In 1927 a guerrilla war was unleashed by a ragged group who grew in number from 26 to 3,000—against 6,000 well-trained and well-equipped U.S. Marines.

The leader of this remarkable guerrilla band was César Augusto Sandino. A mechanic and miner of peasant and Indian stock, he never lost sight of his prime objective: to rid Nicaragua of the U.S. army of occupation and the business interests it was protecting. The seeds he and his followers planted have come to fruition a little more than fifty years later in the Nicaraguan Revolution of 1979.

Gregorio Selser is an Argentinian now living in Mexico. For this edition he has added an Afterword and a Conclusion.

CL5589/$16.00/£8·70

add $1.00 when ordering by mail

62 West 14th St., New York, N.Y. 10011 / 47 Red Lion St., London WC1R 4PF

Subscribe Now! Renew Now!

MONTHLY REVIEW

Special sub rates for students and senior citizens:
$11 (foreign $13); £6·50

☐ 1 year $15 (foreign $18); £ 9·00
☐ 2 years $28 (foreign $33); £16·50
Libraries and institutions $24 (foreign $26); £13·00

Monthly Review
62 West 14th Street
New York, N.Y. 10011

Monthly Review
47 Red Lion Street
London WC1R 4PF,
England

I enclose $..... I enclose £.....

Please send me MONTHLY REVIEW for ☐ one year ☐ two years

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State ..... Zip .....

(Canadian subscribers must pay foreign rate)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(*Continued from inside front cover*)
long habit certainly play a part. But we are beginning to suspect another factor may be gaining in importance in recent times, namely, a (probably well-founded) fear of giving publicity, even of a negatively critical kind, to ideas critical of the national and international *status quo*. The implicit reasoning seems to be that there is so little to be said for it that the safest course is not to call attention to anything that is said against it.

We are glad to be able to report that despite the boycott by the bourgeois media, Daniel Singer's book is doing quite well. When the paperback edition comes out in early 1982, we expect circulation to get a strong further boost. Meanwhile, MR readers can help by recommending *The Road To Gdansk* to friends, colleagues, students, or anyone else likely to be receptive.

Following the assassination last year of Walter Rodney (see William W. Hansen, "Walter Rodney: An Exemplary Life," MR, April 1981), the human rights situation in Guyana has continued to deteriorate. A recent development is the bringing of charges "warranting dismissal" by the politically controlled Governing Council of the University of Guyana against four of the most distinguished members of the university's faculty: Professor Clive Thomas, author of MR Press book *Dependence and Transformation: The Economics of the Transition to Socialism*; Professor Maurice Odle, Director of the Institute of Development Studies; Professor R. James, Head of the Faculty of Law and former Professor of Law at the University of Dar-es-Salaam; and Dr. Perry Mars, Head of the Department of Political Science and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences. A group of "Concerned Academics About Recent Developments at the University of Guyana," which includes more than 40 outstanding scholars and teachers from North and South America, Asia, Africa, and Europe has issued a statement in which they express their "grave concern at this latest development" and their "fervent hope that the University's Governing Council will reconsider the action it has taken, and further that it will find it possible to take steps to establish an atmosphere at the University which is respectful of academic freedom and the right to dissent." Protests may be addressed to: Governing Council, University of Guyana, Georgetown, Guyana, with copies to Prime Minister Forbes Burnham.

We record with sorrow the unexpected death at the age of 67 of our old friend Philip Reno, in Farmington, New Mexico, on May 7th. Phil Reno was the author of "The Ordeal of British Guiana" which was published as the double summer issue of MR in 1964, and later as an MR Press book. Born on his family's ranch in Idaho, Phil was trained as an economist at the Universities of Colorado and New Mexico. He spent his whole adult life working for progressive causes, the last twelve years as teacher and administrator at Navajo Community College at Shiprock, N.M., immersing himself in the struggle of the Indian peoples. His last book, *Mother Earth, Father Sky, and Economic Development*, which we plan to review in a future issue of MR, was published earlier this year by the University of New Mexico Press.

There is more grass-roots writing and publishing going on in this country than anyone can hope to keep track of, and much of it is of remarkably high quality. An excellent example which recently came to our attention is the *Mill Hunk Herald* which describes itself as a "gritty working-class quarterly magazine out of Pittsburgh, looking for creative writers and cheap subscribers ($3 a year)." Larry Evans is the editor, and the address is 916 Middle St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MONTHLY REVIEW PRESS

now in paperback

Conflict and Intervention in the Horn of Africa by Bereket Habte Selassie. ". . . Selassie's incisive analysis, genuine in its concern for the fate of Eritrea, will provide Africanists and general readers with a better understanding of this area. . . ."—LIBRARY JOURNAL. $6.50/£3 • 55 PB5392

The National Question: Selected Writings by Rosa Luxemburg. "No person was better equipped to debate the basic issues of Marxism with Lenin than the brilliant Polish-German intellectual Rosa Luxemburg. And yet a comparison of her ideas with Lenin's has been difficult for English-speaking readers because of the lack of adequate translations. This book remedies this problem. . . . Deserves to be in all academic libraries." —LIBRARY JOURNAL. $7.00/£3 • 75 PB5775

The Race for Resources: Continuing Struggles over Minerals and Fuels by Michael Tanzer. "[This book] is indispensable for those who wish to understand all the dimensions of the role of basic minerals in the world economy today."—JOYCE AND GABRIEL KOLKO. "A succinct analysis of the current mineral situation, recommended. . . ."—LIBRARY JOURNAL. $6.50/£3 • 55 PB5392

The Revolution Disarmed: Chile 1970-1973 by Gabriel Smirnow. "Smirnow's goal is to examine Chile, 1970-73, to see if socialism can be achieved while the old ruling class with its military support and international corporate backing remains intact. . . . The author is exceptionally well qualified for this undertaking as he was an official of the Socialist Party, 1970-73, in Chile. . . . A welcome and absolutely necessary addition to any academic library."—CHOICE. $7.50/£4 • 05 PB4868

Socialist Construction and Marxist Theory: Bolshevism and Its Critique by Philip Corrigan, Harvie Ramsay, and Derek Sayer. "This is an excellent book; its arguments are often original and always important. . . . The authors' project is a theoretical history, in the aftermath of the 1917 Revolution, of the way in which Bolshevism came to present itself as the dominant theory of the transitional phase to communism. . . ." —CHOICE. $7.50/£4 • 05 PB5805

Ujamaa Villages in Tanzania: Analysis of a Social Experiment by Michaela von Freyhold. "Tanzania's experiment with collective production is here critically examined and found wanting. . . . Freyhold's research is extensive and her conclusions well argued. It should be required reading for all development planners. Highly recommended. . . ."—LIBRARY JOURNAL. $5.95/£3 • 25 PB5139

add $1.00 for the first book, 25¢ for each additional book when ordering by mail

62 West 14th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011 / 47 Red Lion Street, London WC1R 4PF

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED